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PUBLIC WORSHIP

BY

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He was greatly interested in the effort after greater beauty of holiness, greater attention to fitness and perfection of form in the expression of religious feeling.

—Memoir of Principal John Caird

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PREFACE

THERE are three strategic points in the work of the minister; and unless he gives to each of these its due weight he can scarcely hope to make full proof of his ministry. Of these the first is the pastorate, the second the religious service, and the third the sermon. No doubt the predominance of the sermon in Christian worship from the beginning has given to the service its peculiar character. The Protestant Reformation laid great emphasis upon the discourse, and Vinet scarcely exaggerates when he says, "With the Catholics, preaching has little place; it is almost everything with us." In the case of the free Churches, which are not bound by any liturgical form, this is especially true. My purpose in this book is to give to all the parts of Public Worship their due importance. It is intended to be complementary to "The Making of the Sermon," and to distribute the emphasis which an exclusive study of Homiletics might be tempted to concentrate on the discourse. We often hear it said that the sermon without the preacher is the gun without the man at the back of it. With equal justice it may be added that the sermon severed from the entire service is shorn of a large measure of its strength. Not alone is the picture robbed of

its frame; even the picture itself is marred and disfigured. It is the peculiar virtue of the Christian religion "that worship and instruction are co-ordinate one to the other, they are interpreted one by the other, and so form a whole." Especially is there need that we lay this truth to heart at the present time. The peril with the service in which a venerable liturgy is made prominent is that too much attention is attached to the church; the peril with the non-liturgical service is that too much responsibility is laid on the minister who officiates. The one is as mischievous as the other if it does any, even the least, dishonor to the simplicity that is in Christ.

T. H. P.

ROCHESTER, May 1, 1900.

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I

PUBLIC WORSHIP DEFINED AND DESCRIBED

SUMMARY

1. Public worship includes the entire service.
2. Too often the other parts of the service are put below the sermon.
3. We must resolve never to do this.
4. In urging the people to attend church, lay stress on the fact that we meet together for worship.
5. Remember that in any part of the service a blessing may be found.

I. CONSIDER THE TERM "PUBLIC WORSHIP."

1. Worship. (1) As to worship in general; (2) As to Christian worship. It includes: *a.* A true appreciation of God; *b.* A recognition of the spiritual character of the worshiper.
2. Public worship. Two features: (1) The special presence of Christ; (2) The presence of others; *a* Limiting and *b.* enlarging the sphere of worship.

NOTE. The Authority for Public Worship.

1. Divine command.
2. Human instinct.

II. CONSIDER THE PROMINENT FEATURES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

1. It should be devout: (1) Preparation of leader; (2) Services a heavenward aspect; (3) Services decorous; (4) Services solemn.
2. It should be inspiring: (1) True worship is full of life; (2) This is the special province of church music.
3. It should be intelligent.
4. It should be restful: (1) Leader to avoid impropriety; (2) Worship simple and fervid; (3) Worship harmonious.

I

PUBLIC WORSHIP DEFINED AND DESCRIBED

1. UNDER Public Worship we include the entire service, from the invocation to the benediction. The sermon should not dominate all other parts of the service, as though it were a mountain and they only a plain lying in its shadow. The other parts of the service should not dwarf the sermon, and by their number or length leave no time or vigor for the full delivery of its message. The Protestant Reformation necessarily laid much stress upon preaching.

2. By the very attitude that it assumed that great movement was put on the defensive, and therefore needed to support its claims by a constant appeal to Scripture. "The Christian congregation," Martin Luther asserted, "should never assemble except the word of God be preached." The same emphatic insistence upon the sermon characterized the churches which, a century or so later, broke away from a liturgy and held by a freer form of worship. The Puritan, in all lands, has been earnest in his plea for the sermon; and it would be idle to assert that in doing this he has not frequently neglected equally important parts of the service. "In other countries," said Isaac Taylor,

"the bell calls people to worship; in Scotland it calls them to a preachment." Charles Kingsley, "with a sneer unworthy both of his genius and his character," found fault with the Dissenters of England because they "went to the church to hear sermons."

3. At the present time the disposition on the part of the non-liturgical churches is toward a reasonable enrichment of the service. It was in the interest of the sermon, as much as of any other part of the public worship of God, that Phillips Brooks declared: "You never can make a sermon what it ought to be if you consider it alone. The service that accompanies it, the prayer and praise, must have their influence upon it."[1]

4. It is well for us, at the outset, to recognize the importance of each part of the church service, and also of the act of worship as a whole. Not to hear a sermon any more than to read the Bible, to sing, or to pray, does the congregation come together. It meets to do all these as conducive to public worship.[2] In urging people to attend church it will be well for us to lay stress upon the fact that we meet for this purpose mainly. "I remember," said Dr. R. W. Dale, "that before I was a minister myself, I was very much astonished when I heard ministers reasoning with their congregations about the duty of attending public worship regularly. I used to think that if I were a preacher and could not make my sermons good enough and attractive enough to

[1] "Yale Lectures," p. 142. [2] Ps. 95.

induce people to come and listen to me in crowds, and because they could not stop away, I should shrink from the humiliation of implicitly confessing my inefficiency by imploring them to come. That was proof of my folly and ignorance. As if Christian people were to meet together principally to listen to a sermon."[1]

5. In what part of the service may not a blessing be found? Insisting upon the care that should be taken in the selection of the hymns to be sung, Mr. Spurgeon recalls the circumstance that an "ungodly stranger stepping into one of our services, at Exeter Hall, was brought to the cross by the words of Wesley's verse: 'Jesus, lover of my soul.'" A country boy unused to public worship goes to a church in Boston, and wearied with his first week of work in the city, sleeps through the entire service. The closing prayer was almost spoken when the hand of sleep was lifted from him. His opening eyes were upon a devout congregation, and his ears caught the four closing words: "For Christ's sake, Amen." "That sleeper was Dwight L. Moody, and the last words of that closing prayer, leading to his conversion, became the motto of a life which alone would be a glory to any church and pastor; a motto very simple, but covering time and eternity: 'For Christ's sake, Amen.'"[2]

I. We may first consider the term "Public Worship." These two words need to be looked at in

[1] R. W. Dale, D. D., "The Communion of Saints," p. 23.
[2] "Life of E. N. Kirk, D. D.," p. 225.

their intention and extent. Evidently the second of them is limited by the first; but we shall do well to think, before going any farther, of

1. What is understood by "worship."

(1) As to worship in general, then, a good deal can be learned from the mere word itself. It is a contraction of the old Saxon noun "worth-ship," which was applied to a person in recognition of the good qualities or worth which he was supposed to possess. Sometimes more honored in the breach than the observance, it still survives in the title given the English mayor, "Your Worship," as "Your Honor" is used as a figure of speech in America. "Then the noun came to be in the verbal form,[1] and to worship was to recognize the worth of the person to whom the worship is addressed. To worship God is to recognize in appropriate ways the worth that is in him."[2] The Book of Common Prayer, preserving this old meaning of the word "worthy," reminds the worshipers that they assemble "to set forth God's most worthy praise"; and when we meet together for worship it is, first of all, to recognize the worth of the God in whose honor it is celebrated.

(2) In Christian worship there is a double modification of this idea.

a. We must have a true appreciation of God as "the Father of our spirits."[3] "God is a Spirit," said Jesus to the woman of Samaria, in the discourse which still remains our fullest authority on the true

[1] Luke 14 : 10. [2] Dr. John Hall. [3] Heb. 12 : 9.

character of worship, "and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."[1] "God is the mind of the universe. Force, law, harmony, all this is of God. And yet remark the coldness of this, for he is thus revealed only as a God for the intellect, not for the heart. Therefore for the heart he is revealed as a Father."[2] Here, then, is the revelation of God by Jesus which is the very core of our Christian worship

b. A further modification of the general idea of worship is found in the spiritual character of the worshiper. The true worshiper "shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers."[3] The voice which spoke this was the voice of the prophet rather than of the priest.[4] To worship the Lord in "the beauty of holiness" could never again be made to mean to worship him "in holy array."[5] It was not the Pharisee, correct in dress and posture, but the penitent publican, who went down to his home justified.[6] To pray "lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting"[7] is to pray indeed. The state of heart of the worshiper will largely determine the acceptableness of his worship before God.

2. We pass on to inquire what is meant by public worship, and we notice that it must have two distinguishing features.

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[1] John 4 : 24. [2] F. W. Robertson, two sermons on "Spiritual Worship."
[3] John 4 : 23. [4] Isa. 1 : 11–17. [5] 1 Chron. 16 : 29.
[6] Luke 18 : 14. [7] 1 Tim. 2 : 8.

(1) The special presence of Christ. It is only when we meet one with another that we can claim the gracious promise of our divine Master: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[1] "In entering into perfect union with each other they enter into perfect union with him. The intimacy of their union with each other determines the intimacy of their union with himself. . . The church is dear to us because in the church is granted to us the special manifestation of the glory and goodness of God."[2] To be assured of the presence of Christ should be the first—shall we not say, the chief?—ambition of the minister. Graduating from the seminary, Dr. R. S. Storrs heard words from an honored and eminent pastor in Boston (Dr. N. Adams) which he never forgot, and which we also do well to lay to heart: "In a certain congregation there was a hearer of whose presence the speaker was not aware during the delivery of his sermon. When the fact of that hearer's presence was made known to him it had a great effect upon the preacher. . . Who was the preacher, and who this hearer? The preacher, I doubt not, may have been any young minister present, and the hearer was Jesus Christ. When the great and the learned and the honored of earth come to hear you; when we meet a few of our flock in that distant schoolhouse on a dark and stormy night, in the bungalow, or under the plantain or the palm, or in those South African huts, where

[1] Matt. 18 : 20. [2] Dr. R. W. Dale, "The Communion of Saints."

you must creep like an animal to get in, remember that you cannot speak in his name but you will speak in his ear."[1]

(2) The second feature which distinguishes public worship is the presence of others. Worship is congregational. It is common in the sense in which that word is used in the phrase, "The Book of Common Prayer."

This fact both limits and enlarges the sphere of worship.

a. It limits it, since because of it the worship becomes not private and peculiar to any one person; but, so far as it is possible to make it so, worship in which all may join. The purely personal element must be made subordinate. There are many hymns which are suitable to the heart in its solitude, or to the family circle around the piano at home, or even to the prayer meeting, which are entirely out of place when in the promiscuous congregation everything that hath breath is invited to praise the Lord. So of petitions and confessions to be used in prayer, and so of many chapters in the Bible. If our common worship is more than any lonely altar can express, it is also less.

b. But the fact that the worship with which we are dealing is public, also enlarges its scope. We join in the rich and varied devotion of the whole congregation. For acceptable worship we need each of us a heart of all conditions. It must be our aim "to pray with the sorrowful for comfort, and

[1] Dr. R. S. Storrs, "Preaching Without Notes," pp. 183, 184.

with the guilty for mercy, to offer thanksgiving with those whose hearts are filled with music and whose homes are bright with joy. Some part of the service should touch and satisfy each worshiper." [1] In her declining years, when perhaps the memories of her early religious fervor frequently came back to her mind, George Eliot wrote to a friend: "If there were no reasons against my following such an inclination, I should go to church or chapel constantly for the sake of the delightful emotions of fellowship which come over me in religious assemblies, the very nature of such assemblies being the recognition of a binding belief or spiritual law, which is to lift us into willing obedience and save us from the slavery of unregulated passion or impulse." Unconsciously to herself, the writer by these words echoed the apostolic injunction: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing near."

NOTE. At this point it may be well for us to notice upon what the authority for public worship rests.

1. It is based upon divine command. The following passages are only a few among many which might be cited: Exod. 34 : 14; Deut. 26 : 10; 2 Kings 17 : 36; Ps. 95 : 6; Acts 2 : 42; Col. 3 : 16; Heb. 3 : 12–14.

2. It also rests upon our own human instinct.

[1] Dr. Dale.

Worship is the satisfaction of a deep-seated impulse of our nature. To believe in a God is to feel need, gratitude, yearning, aspiration. To all these worship gives such an expression as will be sought for elsewhere in vain. There is sound sense in the suggestion of Doctor Tucker: "The Puritan churches have made their uninterrupted appeal for many generations to the reason and conscience. Why should they not also make the appeal more distinctively and impressively to the instinct of reverence and to the craving for worship?"[1] By no other human act can we do such full justice to Augustine's golden words: "O Lord, thou madest us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in thee." And in no other part of our religious life do we more evidently engage

> In such rich offices as suit
> The full-grown energies of heaven

II. We are now prepared to glance at some prominent features in Public Worship.

1. First among these we place that reverence which is so prominent in the worship of the Old and New Testament; and we say that public worship should be devout. This is what moved Jacob when he awakened from his dream at Bethel to exclaim, "How dreadful is this place!"[2] it prompted the psalmist to sing, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for evermore";[3] in the presence

[1] Tucker, "The Making and the Unmaking of the Preacher," p. 126.
[2] Gen. 28 : 17. [3] Ps. 93 : 5.

of the vision of the Lord in his majesty, this brought from Isaiah the cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone; . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." [1] And this it is which inspires the four living creatures in the Revelation who have no rest day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come." [2]

To cherish this devout feeling in his own heart and in the heart of the congregation must be the first endeavor of the minister. The essential idea of the church, Wendell Phillips held to be, "the stated expression of devotional feeling." Praise and prayer and preaching should all promote this.

In our own time reverence is lamentably lacking in many religious services, and it is probable that to this fact, in part, we must ascribe the trend toward liturgical forms of worship which, whatever may be said of the spirit, anyhow preserve an outward deference in the letter. And yet when one recalls the services in which this spirit of reverence was most prominent, it is only fair to confess that they have been oftener than not the services of the free churches rather than those which are confined within the lines of a prescribed liturgy. This needs to be said in order to insist that in this matter, as in so many others, the minister is bound to be an example to his congregation. On him very largely will it rest to make the public worship devout.

(1) Previous to the service let him prepare his

[1] Isa. 6 : 5. [2] Rev. 4 : 8.

spiritual nature by private prayer and meditation, so that he can say, like David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." [1]

(2) During the whole conduct of public worship let him keep in mind that the services have a heavenward as well as an earthward aspect. He stands in the pulpit, as it were, to be the exponent of each of these. With angels and archangels, as well as with men and women like himself, he worships God.

(3) At the bidding of no transient clamor for the sensational should he allow himself to forget the decorum which ought to mark his conduct of the service. Not reverence alone, but even the simplest canon of good taste is violated by the minister of whom a Boston paper reports that, on a national anniversary, one feature in the morning worship was "the playing of 'The Star Spangled Banner' softly on the organ while the pastor was praying."

(4) By his carriage, his tone, his whole conduct, he must impress the congregation with a solemn sense of the most responsible position which he occupies as he leads them in their devotions. Let him pray to be gifted at such times with "a nature at once essentially spiritual, and withal truly human in its sympathies." [2]

2. Again, public worship should be inspiring.

(1) True worship is stimulating and elevating, because it is affluent in life. "This seems to be the condition on which the Jewish prayer book

[1] Ps. 57 : 7. [2] "Life of Robertson of Irvine," p. 352.

(the Psalter) insists beyond all others, the association of the object of our worship with the idea of life. . . The one thing on which it insists is, that its God shall be a living God. That for which the soul of the psalmist thirsts is a fountain of life, an object which, by community of life, can commune with his own nature. 'My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.' One would almost imagine that he had in his mind certain prevalent conceptions of God which made religion 'a dry, parched land.'" [1]

(2) Evidently to rouse and quicken this sense of life, to inspire the worshiper with its enthusiasm, is the special province of church music. It is after invoking the aid of voice and instrument that the psalmist concludes, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." [2]

a. There may be certain parts of the service which are not for the whole congregation, and there seems to be no more reason in the man who cannot play or sing trying to do these than in the man who cannot preach afflicting his brethren with an exhortation. The chant, the anthem, the organ solo, rendered for me by others, may express my sense of praise as I myself cannot.

b. But because the musical part of the service has in it this element of life to a rare degree, it is desirable that it should be largely congregational. To very few people is the ability denied to join heartily in a hymn or chant.

[1] Dr. George Matheson, "Psalmist and Scientist," p. 39. [2] Ps. 150.

c. It should be added that the inspiring character of our worship will very largely determine which hymns shall be most frequently sung. "Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints." [1] The hymns on which the heart of the church has been set in all ages, and especially in times of religious revival and of spiritual quickening, have been hymns of praise.

3. Further, public worship should be intelligent. This follows from the nature of the God whom we adore. It is the Father whom the true worshiper worships in spirit and in truth. John Stuart Mill gave utterance to a supremely Christian sentiment when he said: "If instead of the glad tidings that there exists a Being in whom all the excellencies which the highest human mind can conceive exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a Being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn. . . convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may." [2] It was the joy of each apostle and early preacher that he could confront heathen darkness and philosophical surmise with the assurance: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." [3]

Moreover, that our worship must be intelligent is evident if we remember the purpose which it is intended to serve.

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[1] Ps. 149.
[2] J. S. Mill, "Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy," pp. 101, 102.
[3] Acts 17 : 23.

When he conducts the public religious service, the minister aims to do three things: First, he speaks for himself and his congregation to God; this he does by his words of prayer and by the voice of praise in which he invites the congregation to join. Secondly, he speaks as God's voice to man; by the reading of the Scriptures. Thirdly, he speaks as a man with a message from God to men; and this finds its utterance in the sermon. The main purpose served by public worship, therefore, is intelligent communion with the Father of our spirits. It brings him near to the worshiper, and the worshiper near to him.

4. As a final point, we claim that public worship should be restful. The thing which we intend by this word is perhaps easier understood than defined. It is what the devout worshiper gratefully recognizes when it is present, and wofully misses when, as too often happens, it is absent. It has nothing in common with somnolence or inaction. It is easily disturbed and dissipated. It is capable of distinct cultivation.

(1) We mention only a minor matter, but yet it is one which cannot be passed by without a note of warning, when we say that in public worship the minister should avoid everything which may jar upon that sense of propriety which a refined and cultured worshiper possesses. Not by dress or behavior or language should he offend the reasonable good taste of any of his congregation.

(2) He should strive that the whole act of wor-

ship should be simple and fervid and full of spiritual unction.

(3) He will do well to preserve some measure of harmony between the various parts of the service. Of a minister who gave much care to this matter, it was said: "Whatever the subject of his sermon may be, his prayers, the parts of Scripture read, the hymns sung, are all dominated by the central idea of that subject. The whole service illustrates, as it were, the truth or truths he wishes to impress upon his hearers. There is no haphazard or digression; all is proportionate and relative." [1] Of Robertson of Irvine, the poet-preacher of Scotland, his biographer writes: "The correlatives, as he called them,—praise, prayer, and preaching,—were built up by him on the principle of a progressive unity." And of another minister of the same church, a casual worshiper says: "As we listened to him the other day we could not but remark the oneness of the preacher, the service, and the building. All three were instinct with homogeneous reverence and naturalness." Contrast with this conception of what worship should be, the following report of a service in another place: "We had solos, congregational hymns, organ voluntaries, the brass band of Salvation Army household troops, the singing of a body of hallelujah lads and lassies, while occasional volleys of loud applause by the audience interlarded the services throughout." It is not difficult to decide which of these services

[1] Dr. William Pulsford, Glasgow.

would be the more reverent, inspiring, intelligent, and restful.

Exceptional circumstances will no doubt lead us to vary the service, and even at special times to entirely alter its character; but for the ordinary worship in our churches we may surely claim that it be marked by these four features. The test of a service is often found in the impression which it leaves on the mind of a devout person. Coming away he should be solemnized, quickened, enlightened, and refreshed. His heart should bear witness to the fine discernment of Wordsworth's lines:

> I bent before thy gracious throne,
> And asked for peace on suppliant knee;
> And peace was given—nor peace alone,
> But faith sublimed to ecstasy.

II

THE CONGREGATION

SUMMARY

The Congregation is a Unit:

1. Every congregation is apt to have a distinct character of its own.
2. A congregation can be trained.
3. The minister is largely responsible for the right training of his congregation.

I. THE CONGREGATION MUST BE TRAINED IN BEHAVIOR.

1. Habits to be corrected: Whispering and talking; laughing; staring about; coughing loudly; unpunctuality; sleeping; haste to leave.
2. Correct these habits by raising the general tone of the congregation.
3. In some instances more stringent treatment may be called for.

II. THE CONGREGATION MUST BE TRAINED IN REVERENCE.

1. Respect for the minister. (1) Mainly because of what he is in himself; (2) In part, because he is a minister.
2. Respect for the day.
3. Respect for the meeting-house.
4. Respect for the service.

How to promote this: (1) By previous religious preparation; (2) By encouraging devout habits through the service; *a*. Silent prayer; *b*. Deep reverence; *c*. A reverent posture; *d*. Response of "Amen."

III. THE CONGREGATION MUST BE TRAINED TO HOSPITALITY.

Directions for this training.

N. B. Much can be done by the congregation to bring others to the service.

CONCLUSION. A responsive congregation helps the minister.

II

THE CONGREGATION

THERE will be many times in his ministry when the preacher for purposes of instruction or appeal resolves his congregation into its elements, and, so far as it is possible to do so, considers each hearer separately. On the other hand, when he leads the worship of his people the minister will need to remember that the congregation is a unit.

1. There is likely to be a character which belongs to it, and which distinguishes it from other congregations. No two are precisely alike. We recognize this as true when we think of various denominations. The Episcopalian congregation is not easily mistaken for the Methodist, or the Baptist for the Presbyterian. But it is also true of congregations of the same denomination, and gathering in the same community. To each belongs its own individuality. One is devout, and another indifferent; one hypercritical, and another active and earnest.

2. This leads to the further remark that a congregation, in common with most other bodies, can be trained. It is as susceptible to the influence of the minister as is the young horse to the touch of its master. There is a congregational spirit, a congregational heart, a congregational conscience.

3. For the development of these in a healthful way, the minister is very largely responsible. Let him be especially careful, therefore, as to his own behavior. In the narrower as well as in the broader interpretation of it, there is fitness in Paul's desire for Timothy: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God."[1] He will do well to study his congregation in its component parts and as a whole, and then set to work, with tact and judgment, to educate the people to habits of devout conduct during public worship. In his little parish of Bemerton, holy George Herbert did this, and his biographer writes: "If he were at any time too zealous in his sermons, it was in reproving the indecencies of the people's behavior in the time of divine service; and of those ministers that huddled up the church prayers without a visible reverence and affection; namely, such as seemed to say the Lord's Prayer or collect in a breath; but for himself, his custom was to stop betwixt every collect and give the people time to consider what they had prayed, and to force their desires affectionately to God before he engaged them into new petitions."[2]

Surrounded by a congregation not so large or even so cultured as that which George Herbert thus molded to a finer behavior, Henry Ward Beecher began his ministry. With eighteen cents in his pocket and a prospective salary of three hundred dollars a year, he faced his Lawrence-

[1] 1 Tim. 3 : 15. [2] Isaac Walton, "Life of George Herbert."

burg audience in the little church which on the Saturday afternoon before his own hands had prepared for decent occupancy; and his wife recalls the Sunday morning service when he set himself to the harder task of bringing order out of chaos in his congregation: "He read the first hymn and read it well—as they had never heard their own ministers (often illiterate, uneducated men) read hymns. I watched the expressions change on their faces. Then the first prayer! It was a revelation to them, and when he began the sermon the critical expression had vanished, and they evidently settled themselves to hear in earnest."[1] By and by, he became so completely the master of the congregation that he would let no interruption during the service pass unreproved, "and when late-comers appeared, he would stop speaking till they were seated." It is with some of the things to which a congregation can be trained that we have now to deal. Before considering them it needs to be said that the full force of a pastor's power in this matter can only be felt by the people to whom he regularly ministers. In the case of an occasional service to a congregation which is strange to him, he can do but little. Under such circumstances it is not wise to change the existing order of the service, or to draw attention to his own opinions and methods; and he will also need to remember that the support which comes to him from knowing his congregation and being known by those

[1] Scoville, "Life of H. W. Beecher," p. 173.

who worship with him, is lacking now. There is less to which he can appeal in the confidence of a ready response. His fingers are on an instrument whose chords are unaccustomed to his touch.

I. Having in mind now the people to whom he ministers statedly, we remark that the congregation must be trained in behavior. By this we mean outward decorum.

1. There are habits which need to be corrected. "As you preach the word, my dear brother," writes Mr. Robert Burdette, "cast your eyes around upon the congregation, and you will observe these people, namely: The sleeper, the old-timer from Sleepy Hollow; the lounger, who falls into the pew and slides easily into the most comfortable corner; the fidget, who folds his arms across his breast, then crosses them behind his back, then thrusts his hands into his pockets, drops a Bible on the floor, and puts his feet into his hat; the watcher, whose neck is fitted on a globe-socket and turns clear round, and who sees so much that he has no time to listen; the time-keeper, who as you pronounce your text, takes out his watch, looks at it carefully, and closes it with a snap that says "Go" clear to the pulpit; the squeaker, who comes late, sits well up in front, and wears boots that are vocal monsters; and the 'Talking Traveler,'" of whom Mr. Burdette remarks, "This brother is usually a sister. She comes to church Sunday morning careful and troubled about all the unfinished missionary and sewing-circle business of the week, and for pur-

poses of consultation flits from one sister to another and buzz, buzz, buzz, the talk goes on in the itinerant caucus."

Underneath the humor of this classification the minister recognizes a vein of kindly reproof. The whisperers are often very good people, and the business which concerns them and disturbs the devout worshiper has frequently to do with the work of the church. The habit of laughing and jesting during the service may have grown chronic for lack of early correction; and not every minister will venture to adopt the heroic treatment employed by a long-suffering preacher who being annoyed in this way, paused in his discourse, looked at the disturbers, and said: "I am always afraid to reprove those who misbehave, for this reason: Some years since, as I was preaching, a young man who sat before me was constantly laughing, talking, and making uncouth grimaces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. After the close of the service a gentleman said to me: 'Sir, you made a great mistake; that young man was an idiot.' Since then I have always been afraid to reprove those who misbehave themselves in church, lest I should repeat that mistake and reprove another idiot." During the rest of that service there was good order. To survey the congregation with a view to see who is, and especially who is not present, is sometimes an office for which some particular deacon believes himself especially qualified. The man who has not elsewhere trained

himself to repress, so far as possible, the cough and its accompanying demonstrations, will not be likely to begin that neglected branch of his education in manners in the church. Unpunctuality would seem to be an inherited frailty in congregations, although in no other part of the world (if we may credit the observations of those who have made a study of the subject), is it so completely reduced to a system as in America. In the records of a Baptist church in Yorkshire, England, which date from nearly a century ago, we may read: "Brother E. Crossley is desired to speak as he may have opportunity to such persons as coming too late or walking too fast upstairs disturb the congregation"; and two hundred years earlier George Herbert sang:

> Sunday observe; think when the bells do chime
> 'Tis angels' music; therefore come not late.

Far gone although he be, the late-comer may yet have a conscience which will be brought to time by the answer that a lady gave to the inquiry why she always came early to church: "Because it is part of my religion never to disturb the religion of others."

The habit of sleeping in church can plead antiquity in its support, as can so many other practices which are more time-honored than honored in any better way. That Samuel Pepys attended church so regularly and profited by the sermon so little, is in part accounted for if we note with what frequency he owns in his Diary to having preferred

a doze to a discourse ; and the preacher, if he notices a general disposition to somnolency on the part of his congregation will do well to lay to heart what a witty Frenchman said to an author who blamed him for condemning his composition when as a fact the critic had been sleeping all the time that it was being read, "My friend, sleep is an opinion."

Against the unseemly practice of scrambling for the hat, or even into the overcoat, while the final hymn is being sung or the benediction pronounced, Dr. John Hall remonstrated: "There is no need that you should have your hat in your hand, no need that you should have the greatcoat upon the shoulder, nor yet that, the moment the last syllable is pronounced, doors should be thrown open, as though you were eager and impatient until the thing had come to a close. It would be well—it would be better, more in harmony with outward expressions of reverence—if there were a moment's silence, a silent pause, indicating that, when the service is closed, you have not been eager for its close, and then it is yours to go away in the hopeful confidence that God had been reverently waiting upon you, and whose benediction had been pronounced over you in his name and by his authority, would go with you and help you to make the rest of your life, not secular as distinguished from religious, but spiritual and godly through and through." [1]

[1] "Homiletic Review," March, 1885.

This is a wiser method of correcting a most unseemly habit than that of the minister who tried to break it up by remarking: "Those of the congregation who do not get their things on during the prayer can do so while I pronounce the benediction." The loss of temper which betrays itself in a sarcasm is likely to result in a corresponding loss of influence; and nowhere is influence needed more than when these careless and irreverent customs, which may have gone for many years unchecked, come to be reproved.

2. Indeed, no sounder method of reformation can be suggested than to raise the general tone of the congregation, and this will demand patience and tact. Sydney Smith said of the British House of Commons, that as a whole, it had more good taste than any one man in it. This is true also of a congregation. There is a body of behavior in it resembling the body of public opinion in civil matters. This can be elevated by strenuous and intelligent education. It is wise to notice with words of commendation every sign of reformation. Accustom the people to take such a healthful pride in their reputation for devout behavior as will lead them instinctively to resent any lowering of the standard. Do not count this matter unworthy of a prayer meeting talk when the time is ripe for it.

3. Without doubt there may be instances of unseemly behavior which will call for more stringent treatment. But forbear, so long as it is possible to do so, from speaking to an offender in public. Go

to him alone, and remonstrate. It is quite possible that his education in the minor moralities of Christianity has been neglected. Neither the home nor the daily work has taught him reverence, and perhaps even courtesy has little or no meaning to him. Sometimes it will remedy the evil if you pause in the service until the interrupter becomes conscious of the annoyance he is causing. There may, however, be extreme cases in which it is absolutely necessary for you "to speak out in meeting" against ill behavior. If there is, then, without losing your temper, do not spare the offender. You may even go further, and secure the presence of a policeman when some long-continued disturbance imperils profitable worship, or which is better, you can have yourself, or some official in the church, sworn in as a special constable with power to enforce order. The early New England church had a recognized authority in the tithing man, equipped with a long staff, heavily knobbed at one end, and furnished with a hare's foot for gentler discipline at the other; the English beadle divided such duties with the warden, who was also armed with a rod and encouraged to use it when necessary; and Addison tells us how the stately Sir Roger de Coverley was in the habit of occasionally rising in his pew during the service to see that his tenants were ordering themselves lowlily and reverently. We have not yet reached the time when we can entirely dispense with the power behind the pulpit any more than we can with the power behind the throne.

II. Secondly, the congregation must be trained in reverence. Reverence lies at the roots of behavior, and powerfully affects it, influencing our treatment of the day in which we gather for worship, and of all that the act itself involves.

1. It should be evident, for one thing, in respect for the minister.

(1) Mainly, let us hope, this respect will be accorded to him because of what he is in himself. His character, apart from his office, must command the confidence of his people, and he, in his turn, must learn to respect them. Without this there can be no satisfactory fellowship and no worship worthy of the name. To minister and congregation alike comes the word: "And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord." [1] Well does Phillips Brooks say: "The whole of the relation between the preacher and the congregation is plain. They belong together. But neither can absorb or override the other. They must be filled with mutual respect." [2]

(2) Yet in part this respect is also due to the minister as the minister. He is the man chosen by the church to conduct the worship. In honoring him the people also honor themselves. "There is an authority belonging to the man who holds the ministerial office, an authority hard to define, but the recognition of which is essential to the peace of the church and to its vigorous action." [3] While,

[1] Ezek. 34 : 31. [2] "Yale Lectures," Lecture VI. [3] Dr. W. R. Dale.

therefore, the minister will avoid all priestly assumption, he will never suffer himself to forget that he is in the pulpit as a recognized ambassador of Christ.

2. Reverence should further show itself in respect for the day. The usage of centuries has set Sunday apart for sacred rest, for communion with God, and for his public worship. Independent of all controversy as to authority, it is enough for our purpose that this general usage has settled for us the question of the true purport of Sunday. It cannot be treated as other days are. Certainly the hours set apart for worship are to be spent devoutly. It is of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who pretended to little respect for traditional authority in religion, that one of his friends writes: "There was in the corner of his heart a place called reverence, which needed to be watered once a week."

3. We mention as another way in which reverence should be apparent, a respect for the meeting-house. He who would not wear his hat in the house of a friend, will certainly not wish to do so in the house of the Lord. There is nothing superstitious in the feeling which cherishes with respectful affection the place which is associated with so much that is sacred in our lives. There we were brought to worship in our childhood, there the message which led to our conversion reached us, there we were baptized, and there first we sat at the Lord's table with men and women whose memory is unspeakably dear and fragrant to us. The meet-

ing-house should, so far as is possible, be employed only for religious purposes. Not willingly should we lower its character by any purely secular usage. It has not been consecrated by ecclesiastical ceremonies, but yet it is holy ground by the fact that to many souls it is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.

4. We may certainly claim that the spirit of reverence will be seen in our respect for the service.

(1) To strengthen this it is well to encourage previous religious preparation on the part of the people. At the mid-week prayer meeting you may sometimes urge that special prayer be offered on behalf of the services of the next Sunday. Occasionally call the people together during the week to plead for the same object. Some churches have a Saturday night prayer meeting when they "pray on to the Sunday"; more common is the early Sunday morning prayer meeting; and, of late years, the five minutes which the minister spends in prayer with his deacons immediately before going into the public service, morning and evening.

(2) If this earnest spirit of expectancy has been cherished beforehand it will not be a hard matter to encourage devout habits during the service.

a. As the worshiper takes his seat, let there be a few moments of silent prayer. Call the attention of the church to this privilege, of which too little has been made.

b. By word, act, and spirit, inculcate deep reverence for God and his worship. With what holy

awe the patriarchs approached his throne. How one feels the hush of godly fear as the high priest lifts the curtain and passes into the Holy of Holies. It was before the vision of the God whom we adore that Isaiah cried :[1] "Woe is me! . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." "Surely," says Lewis Carroll, "there is a deep meaning in our prayer, 'Give us an heart to love and dread thee.' We do not mean terror, but a dread that will harmonize with love; 'respect' we should call it as toward a human being, 'reverence' as toward God and all religious things."

c. Our devotions would be helped were we to assume as far as we can do so, a reverent posture in prayer. "Here," says the Episcopal Prayer-book, "the congregation shall kneel on their knees," but even where provision has been made for doing this, it is too often true, as a French satirist has lately remarked, that the "faithful kneel on something else; they sit down and then with their elbows on their knees, the upper part of the body thrown forward and their faces buried in their hands, they look from a certain distance as if they were all on their knees, whereas they are all comfortably seated." At least it is possible to urge on the people that during prayer the head be bowed, and face be shaded by the hand, and the eyes closed.

d. There seems no reason, also, why the congregation should not be trained to say "Amen" after the prayer; and the quiet moment at the close of

[1] Isa. 6 : 5.

the service, when the whole congregation remains in silent prayer, will be secured if the benediction be pronounced with the people seated, and if the minister makes a brief pause between the last words of the benediction and the final "amen."

The minister will himself be the gainer, as well as the people of his charge, if he makes a serious business of training his congregation in reverence. A New England pastor, with strong Puritan sympathies, finds himself deeply impressed while attending the Protestant churches in Europe with the devout appearance of the congregation. He says: "I used often to find myself in a church where a sacred stillness pervaded the assembly as the minister led our devotions. Nearly all bowed their heads in prayer, as they took their places in the pews. They listened attentively, and they joined in singing and chanting as though they desired to have a part in the worship. They were in no haste to leave their seats after the benediction. It is easier to preach in England than at home, because English congregations are so attentive and so responsive."[1]

We have been dealing in this chapter with what may be called the externals of worship, with matters which belong rather to its seemly and successful conduct than to its deeper purpose. The behavior of a congregation and the respect which it shows for the service are indeed of great importance, but

[1] "The Church of Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," E. H. Byington Smith, D. D.

mainly because they are the surface manifestation, outward and visible, of hearts and minds and truth.

III. We shall make our subject complete if we add that the congregation should be trained to hospitality.

A church, as much as other places, has a climate. The atmosphere is sometimes warm and genial, at others it is cold and repelling. The architecture of the building is in part responsible for this. The Gothic cathedral, ingeniously planned to circulate draughts and create echoes, is not so conducive to profitable worship as the building planned on the lines of the old Jewish synagogue, the early basilica, or the familiar New England meeting-house. A good many churches have yet to learn the secret of lighting up more brightly in front, so as to attract the passers-by. The name of the church and of the minister should be plainly exposed on a board in a prominent place on the church, where all will be likely to see it. The habit of substituting for this useful information, the name and address of the sexton and undertaker is to be avoided ; it only suggests that the church, like the potter's field, is chiefly used as a place to bury strangers in.

The minister should set himself to the work of stimulating the hospitality of the congregation. The following hints may be of use to him :

1. Aim to give to the whole church service a social, homelike feeling. " Let three doors be open here," was the counsel of that model pastor, Dr.

C. L. Goodell, "the door of the church, the door of the pew, the door of the heart." A partner of Richard Cobden's used to say that he could not work properly in a temperature of less than sixty-five degrees, and in like manner the moral temperature should be kept warm in order to profitable worship.

2. Make strangers welcome. It will be well if the church is furnished with an ample vestibule where you can speak to them at the close of the service, if you adopt that method of greeting them, and where, in any case, a welcoming committee should have one or more of its members always present. "An usher at each door is ready for you," says Mr. Robert Burdette; "there is a perfect picket line of sextons and deacons and ushers along the front of the church of the Samaritans; not to keep people out but to bring them in; it isn't a fort, it's a hospital; it's a man-trap, baited with Christian courtesy, and the man who is caught there never tries to get away." The ushers should be selected with care; let them be genial, attentive, business-like, and instructed to seat the early comers well to the front. A committee on strangers may with advantage be appointed in a large church, or one in which the congregation changes often. The duty of this committee will be to receive from the pastor lists of persons who have attended the church service and visit them. He, in his turn, gets these names by means of cards placed for the purpose in the pews, and to which

he occasionally calls the attention of the congregation.

3. During the service, keep your eye on the people ; from your position you may see much that will escape the notice of others. Be able to beckon to your side an usher or deacon, by means of a preconcerted signal, so that he may receive directions or suggestions. Encourage the officers of the church and the members of the congregation to bring occasional worshipers to be introduced to you at the close of the service.

Be in the study or remain for a while in front of the pulpit for this purpose. More than one minister has adopted the excellent plan of keeping the lecture room or the church parlors open for an hour after the evening service on Sundays, and inviting all who will to remain for a social hour. To numbers of young people in our cities who have no homes to which to return, this has been a means of permanent good.

4. Let the congregation be trained to be sociable. Introduce pew-holders to those who occupy seats near them. At one church in a large Eastern city, each member of a certain committee is pledged to make any strangers in the five pews in front of him feel at home in the church.[1] After each service he speaks to them and shows them other attentions calculated to make them wish to come again. Try to get the members of the church to feel their responsibility in this matter of congrega-

[1] "Goodell's Life," p. 375.

tional hospitality. To a member of the pulpit committee of a large city church that was in search of a minister who would attract and hold a congregation, Dr. Henry Van Dyke said, with wholesome plainness of speech: "Twenty congregations have passed through your church in the last twenty years; and they have passed through because you have not had a church that will hold. You want a church that will hold the people when they get into it. The minister cannot hold. Success depends not half so much upon the minister as upon you, the church." Let the pew-holders themselves bring in those whom they may see in the vestibules or aisles in need of seats. Have the pews well supplied with hymn books and Bibles, and accustom the people to pass them to strangers, even though they themselves may have to go without. He who once finds his way into the church of which Mr. Burdette writes is likely to return: "You get comfortably seated and somebody pushes a hassock toward you; a child in the next pew hands you a hymn book; an old lady puts a Bible into your hand. The minister looks at you as though he had seen you before, and was glad to see you again."

One of the first memoranda that Henry Ward Beecher made in his journal when called to his little Western church ran thus: "My people must be alert to make the church agreeable, to give seats, and wait on strangers." Mindful of her early experiences in a city church, of her utter

loneliness in a crowd in which there seemed to be no one to sympathize with her lot or to care for her religious needs, a Christian woman writes "to urge that we see to it that there are no strangers left in our church to feel that not one of God's people cares a thought for their welfare or spiritual growth. In all our large cities there is a mass of moving humanity, men and women who have left their homes at the very verge of childhood, thrown out to drift or struggle along upon the world's tossing billows, and it may be that, entering the house of worship, many of them may meet the first true, earnest greeting from a kindly heart that has been given for years. Shall we let them go uncheered?"

As a young man Daniel Macmillan was first a Baptist and afterward an Independent. Subsequently he passed over to the Church of England, and became probably the most influential and prosperous publisher of the literature of that church that our century has seen. It was with feeling of affection and respect and reverence that he bade farewell to Mr. Binney, the minister of the place of worship in London which he had attended; but he was careful to add: "As no one there ever spoke to me, as I know no one there, and can have no respect or affection for the church, it costs me no pain to leave it."[1] A few years since the minister of another church, in announcing that he had received a letter from one who had been a member of the church and wished his name erased, quoted

[1] "Memoir of Daniel Macmillan," p. 73.

the words with which this request closed: "I esteem your church for its high gentlemanly tone, but I pity those who join it with the expectation of receiving any Christian fellowship." No doubt in many cases similar to these the fault is by no means all on one side; but with that we are not now concerned. Our duty is to inculcate and to practise the grace of congregational hospitality. If any should go away lonely of heart and unnoticed, let it be through no lack of cordiality on the part of the minister and his people. The one as much as the other is responsible for the hospitable atmosphere of the church. To a larger extent than is often thought by us, the members of the church can work for the building-up of the congregation. In an old Baptist church-book these words may be found: "Approved of the suggestion from Brother Ackroyd, that all the members use their utmost endeavor to bring their neighbors to the public meetings." The sight of so many empty pews greatly discouraged Mr. Spurgeon on his first Sunday morning at New Park Street Chapel, London. "What can be done?" one of the deacons asked of his family when they returned from the service. "We must get him a better congregation to-night, or we shall lose him." "So all that Sabbath afternoon there ensued a determined looking up of friends and acquaintances, who by some means or other were coaxed into giving a promise that they would be at Park Street in the evening, to hear the wonderful boy-preacher." Mr. Spurgeon had seen his

last of the empty pews; and he never failed to insist that his immediate success in London was due, in no small measure, to the recruiting work done from the very beginning by the members of his congregation.

In conclusion, let me remind the minister that nothing will help him during the service (with the exception, of course, of the presence of the Holy Spirit), so much as a responsive congregation. Eloquence in its highest forms is due to an eloquent hearer as well as to an eloquent speaker. In our congregational worship each responsive heart is of substantial service to the minister. And if he has been happy enough to win their affection and to command their respect, he will not appeal to them for this response in vain. The heartiness with which a congregation falls in with the wishes of the pastor in these matters of behavior, reverence, and hospitality is only one proof among many of the love and loyalty which it delights to show to him. "I cannot help bearing witness," said Phillips Brooks, "to the fairness and considerateness which belongs to this strange composite being, the congregation. His insight is very true, and his conscience on the whole is very right. Whether the minister feels the congregation or not, the congregation feels the minister. Often the horse knows the rider better than the rider knows the horse."[1]

[1] "Yale Lectures," p. 211.

III

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

SUMMARY

I. THE MINISTER'S CONDUCT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

1. Appearance. As to dress.
2. Manner.
3. Habits: (1) Punctuality; (2) Decorum; (3) Devoutness.

NOTE. The extremes of assumption and subservience to be avoided. 1. Not extreme. 2. The minister to lead.

II. THE ORDER OF WORSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

1. The arrangement of the various parts of the service: (1) Pay attention to devotion, praise, edification, rest. Beware of exaggerating the sermon at the expense of the other parts of the service. Formerly more common than now; still done, encouraged sometimes by pulpit notices in the newspapers; (2) Preserve a settled order; (3) Do not unnecessarily multiply the parts of the service.

NOTE. 1. As to the pastor's register. 2. As to the collection. 3. The length of the service. 4. Proportion to be observed in the service.

NOTE. As to making announcements from the pulpit.

APPENDIX. Examples of orders of services.

1. The Puritan model. 2. The Puritan model enriched. 3. More elaborate forms.

III

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

I. ALMOST a hundred years ago, Sydney Smith said that his countrymen, generally remarkable for doing good things in a very bad manner, seemed to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. Everywhere else, he said, men were more natural than they were there. To this charge others of us are exposed than those against whom it was originally brought. In considering our present subject, it will be well, therefore, to deal at once with the minister's conduct of the public service.

1. That he be careful as to his appearance is a matter of some importance. The simplest rule as to dress is that he must wear nothing that can, by attracting attention to him, divert it from his office. Let him wear in the pulpit what it is customary to wear. The distinctly clerical dress is less common now than it was formerly. Robert Hall preached in a dress suit; and before his time it is likely that the black Geneva gown was in use in the Nonconformist pulpits of England, while the white tie has lingered down to the present time. When we learn that during his first regular engagement as a minister, John Foster officiated in a crimson waistcoat,

and was attended to the pulpit by "Pero, a large and very generous dog, my most devoted friend," we are not surprised that a little more than three months' trial sufficed to reconcile his congregation to dispensing with his services. The answer which Jesus made to the importunity of the Syro-Phœnician woman should have silenced him while it emboldened her. It was not seemly to give the children's meat to dogs. Mrs. Spurgeon, as a girl, hearing her future husband for the first time, failed "to understand his earnest presentation of the gospel and his powerful pleading with sinners; but the huge black satin stock, the long, badly-trimmed hair, the blue pocket-handkerchief with white spots," attracted her attention by appealing to her sense of the ludicrous. The minister will do well to arrange his coat before entering the pulpit, and to avoid the appearance of slovenliness or even of haste in making his toilet. An impression which is favorable or the reverse may often be created by matters as seemingly trifling as these. That Doctor Kirk, of Boston, entered the pulpit with a grace and naturalness which at once pleased the eye, prepared a critic to conclude that "his personal manners gave the entire tone and effect to his discourse."[1] We may not go so far as to say with Nathaniel Hawthorne, when lamenting his own deficiencies, "God may forgive sins, but awkwardness has no forgiveness in heaven or in earth"; but still we may, without the suspicion

[1] "Life of E. N. Kirk, D. D.," p. 318.

of being over-refined, lay stress upon the carriage and bearing of the minister when he comes to occupy a very trying position.

2. Daniel Webster held it to be an evidence of the divine origin of Christianity that it had so long survived being preached in tub pulpits. To the minister, however, the platform of our time is not less exacting. The observed of all observers, he has not the range of resources provided for the actor on the stage. He is alone. The entire service is to be conducted by him. He cannot divert attention from himself. The platform should be furnished with a desk, upon which the Bible and hymn book can be laid, and behind which, during the main part of the service, the minister will stand. His chair should be near enough to reach it without taking the Sabbath day's journey which in some churches is suggested by the objectionable practice, now happily falling into disuse, of cumbering the platform with a large lounge placed against the wall and far removed from the desk. The platform is a place for business, not for ease. To banish the pulpit altogether is to suggest a theatre; to furnish it with a sofa or richly upholstered chairs is to suggest a parlor. That minister is happy who possesses the faculty of seeing at once and instinctively the fitness of things. He may even be thankful if he has a quick sense of the ludicrous. Dean Stanley wondered on one occasion that his great audience in Westminster Abbey was so unusually attentive; but his complacency was shattered at a blow when

his wife told him that all the while he was preaching he carried on the top of his bald head a black kid glove which had fallen from his hat when he had removed it on entering the church. The congregation was speculating how long the glove would hold its place. Guard carefully against all tricks and eccentricities of manner; let neither nervousness nor absent-mindedness betray you into any habit which would mar the effectiveness of the service. It has been said that it is with the æsthetic sense that we worship God; and certainly we should train ourselves to distinguish and to prize at its full value the beauty as well as the strength that ought to be found in his sanctuary.

3. From these preliminary points, of appearance and manner, we pass on to consider the minister's habits in conducting public worship.

(1) As the first of these, let us name punctuality. Set an example, where an example certainly needs to be set, and train your congregation to being on time by being on time yourself. It is better far to be too soon than to be too late, and indeed the few moments which you spend in the church previous to the service will be of great use to you. They will help you to become entirely master of yourself, and will give you deliberateness and a sense of readiness. Never start a service in a hurried frame of mind. To do this is to court failure. The five minutes lost at the beginning will be sure to follow you, and throughout the service the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase you. On the other hand,

Doctor Dale testifies that to be in the church before the service and to "think why we are gathered together, and what promise Christ has given to the two or three who meet in his name, is to almost certainly insure his blessing."

(2) As another habit to be cultivated, we mention decorum. It was of the house of God that Paul wrote: "Let all things be done decently and in order."[1]

On entering the pulpit we commend the habit of silent prayer. In conducting the service avoid any sense of pushing on. Have frequent pauses between the various parts. Since it is not seemly that persons coming late should be shown to their seats during any part of the service, these pauses should be utilized for that purpose. In concluding, be deliberate in pronouncing the benediction, and pause before the final amen. Be very careful to handle the Bible respectfully. Do not remove it from the desk. Expound, but do not pound it as you preach. In case you prefer to use a Bible which can be carried in the hand, treat it with reverence. Do not double the back or turn down the leaves, or throw the book carelessly upon the desk, nor use it as an imaginary catapult to be driven at the people or as a figurative standard to be waved over them.

(3) This suggests that we also urge the preacher to be devout in his conduct of public worship. Throughout the entire service be a worshiper yourself. Be thoroughly engaged in it, so that as each

[1] 1 Cor. 14 : 40.

part is attended to, it can be truthfully said of you, "Prayer all his business, all his pleasure, praise." Doing this you will interest and affect your congregation from the beginning. Of Patrick Henry pleading in Culpepper courthouse, Doctor Alexander writes: "His very manner in rising to his feet, and his attitude before the court, were themselves eloquence, which made me for the moment believe, in spite of the most damning testimony, that the accused were innocent." To turn to one whose long ministry was devoted to a nobler task than that of Patrick Henry, we may be allowed to quote at length what his biographer says of the conduct of religious worship by the late John Angell James, of Birmingham, England: "As Mr. James slowly ascended the pulpit, the stranger would see in his calm and solemn countenance that his spirit was awed by a sense of God's presence; and, after the opening psalm was read, and a hymn sung, he offered a prayer which was generally characterized by the profoundest awe and reverence for the Divine Majesty, and by earnest, sometimes impassioned supplication for spiritual blessings. The Scriptures were then read a second time, and a second prayer was offered, in which intercession was made for "all sorts and conditions of men," for the queen on the throne, for the ministers of the crown, for judges and magistrates, for merchants and tradesmen, for masters and servants, for the rich, the poor, and the troubled, for all Christian churches and ministers, and very often for some

special department of Christian labor; missions in China and the East being often remembered. And again, at the close of the prayer, there were solemn ascriptions of praise, sometimes swelling into lofty eloquence, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The tones of his voice, rich and deep, his manner—never hurried and generally very deliberate—added solemnity to the devotional part of the service; and many, I should suppose, are ready to acknowledge with myself that his prayers were often characterized by even brighter excellencies than his sermons."[1]

NOTE. At this point it may be well to caution the minister against running either to the extreme of assumption or to its opposite, the extreme of subservience.

1. He is no more a priest than is any other devout Christian person in the congregation. He never ceases to be one of those who are gathered for worship. "The pattern of Christian worship is not the tabernacle or temple. We see not Aaron entering as God's high priest within the veil, whilst the people are standing without, waiting for the return of their intercessor, but Paul the apostle and servant of Jesus Christ, calling the people 'brethren,' saying, 'Let us draw near,'—minister and people,—all entering within the veil with the 'common supplication,' Paul kneeling down and praying 'with them all.'"[2] Not by tone or gesture should

[1] "Life and Letters of J. A. James," by R. W. Dale, p. 618.
[2] Pearsall, "Public Worship," p. 12.

the minister assume the office of priest. It is even unnecessary for him to beckon the people to rise to sing; and certainly the hand should never be lifted in the benediction in the same way in which it is raised by the priest who claims mysterious authority by virtue of episcopal imposition.

2. Yet while the minister should not assume the priestly, as little should he fall into a condition of obsequious subservience to his congregation. He is in the pulpit to lead their devotions as truly as a general is at his post to marshal his troops. The officer who should say to his soldiers, "Shoulder arms, if you please," would fail to command their respect. The minister who says, "Sing, if you please," as if it depended on their acquiescence, or, even more feebly, "Shall we sing?" as if there were any question about it, has yet to learn the first lesson in leadership. "He is to direct them, and not to request them, to celebrate the praises of the Lord. Let him not belittle the dignity of his office by introducing phrases which belong merely to social etiquette into the worship of Almighty God."[1]

II. We may now deal with the order for worship in the public service.

1. As to the arrangement of the various parts of the service.

(1) You must see to it that due attention is paid to the four essentials to worship of which we have already spoken in chapter one, namely, devotion,

[1] "The Evangelist."

praise, edification, and rest. These four things should be met and ministered to by the four elements of public worship: communion with God in prayer; the reverent ascertainment of his will by the reading of the Scriptures; the unfolding, application, and enforcement of that revelation upon the heart and conscience by preaching; and the united ascription of thanksgiving to God by praising him in song.[1]

Beware of lengthening any one part of the service—the sermon for example—at the expense of the whole. In the service, as in the body, the members should care one for another, knowing that no one can suffer without all suffering with it. The preacher who, one Sunday morning, some fifty years ago, omitted the reading of the Scriptures from the usual order of worship in a Boston church, and afterward explained to one of the deacons that he did so because he wished to do full justice to his sermon, was very properly reminded by that faithful official that perhaps his congregation would have consented to forego a portion of the discourse if they could have had instead a portion of God's word.

One of Lyman Beecher's hearers in the First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, recalls how, on one occasion, the preacher, then at the height of his powers, came in late, pressed his way up the crowded aisle with a piece of blotted manuscript in his hand, ascended the pulpit, opened the Bible,

[1] "The Congregational Idea," by Dr. Williston Walker, p. 7.

spread his manuscript, took his text, and was about to begin his sermon without any preliminary exercises. One of the elders rose from his pew and stood. The elder looked at the doctor, the doctor looked at the elder. The elder came out of his pew, the doctor came down the stairs, and they met. The elder whispered a few words in the doctor's ear, the doctor reascended, closed his Bible and said: "Let us pray."

That we have not entirely outgrown the fashion for emphasizing the sermon, even though the rest of the service is thrown into the shade by doing so, may be seen by consulting the announcements of Sunday services as they appear in the Saturday journals. How often the notice runs to the effect that the minister will preach at 10.30 A. M. and 7.30 P. M., as though there were to be no other worship than that which is enjoyed by listening to him. The better form would be "Public worship at 10.30 A. M. and 7.30 P. M., with preaching by the pastor."

(2) Perhaps it is only necessary to say in passing that it is wise to preserve a settled order. The congregation should not have its attention diverted from the thing itself to the way in which it is done. We further counsel that for the convenience of the ministers strange to the church who will occasionally conduct the service, it is well to have the order of worship printed clearly, and a copy laid on the pulpit desk where it can readily be seen.

(3) In view of the disposition to multiply the

parts of the service unnecessarily, a word of caution may be in place on this point. Many a service is spoiled because it is so much broken up. The current of right feeling is arrested by some uncalled-for anthem or some irrelevant chant. The minister obtrudes himself upon the congregation by a needless announcement or meaningless bit of ritual; and so the worshiper is set back when he ought rather to be set forward. With a remembrance of the purposeless elaboration in many services, we turn with some relief to the severe plainness of the old Puritan order, as it was formerly observed, for example, in the chapel of which Dr. R. W. Dale was for so many years the minister. Its lines are those of the Grecian temple rather than of the Gothic cathedral, but they are strong in their sturdy simplicity: 1. The reading of a psalm. 2. Singing. 3. Prayer. 4. Reading the Scriptures. 5. Prayer. 6. Singing. 7. Sermon. 8. Singing. 9. Prayer and benediction.

NOTE 1. The minister will find it a useful thing to keep a pastor's register, and to post it up week by week, so as to know at a glance when a certain hymn has been sung or chapter of the Bible read. Doing this he will be more likely to insure freshness and variety in his selections.

2. This may be the best place in which to urge that the collection should have a recognized place in the Order of Service and be always considered an act of worship. Christian beneficence is a distinct means of grace. Treat it as such. Come

down from the pulpit and distribute the collection boxes to the deacons, or whoever they be that take the offerings. While the collection is being made repeat, either entirely yourself or alternately with the choir, suitable texts of Scripture. When the boxes are brought back to the pulpit receive them and let the congregation rise and join in the doxology,—unless that has been already sung, —and in any case offer a brief prayer presenting the offering to God, thanking him for the opportunity of giving and asking him to accept and bless the contribution.

3. As to the length of the service, not much needs to be said. The age in which we live is favorable to brevity rather than to length. Two hundred years ago—mainly in consequence of the staying power of the minister in the prayers and the sermon—the service would at times last from three to six hours. The order of worship in the meeting-house at Chester, England, where Matthew Henry ministered for a quarter of a century, is thus described: "Every Lord's Day morning, after secret and family devotions, he joined his congregation in public worship at nine o'clock. The service opened with the hundredth Psalm, then followed a brief but fervent invocation: then a portion from Old Testament Scripture was solemnly read and expounded in its order. After a second singing he prayed again at greater length; then followed the sermon of about an hour, with a closing prayer, singing, and benediction. The service lasted up-

ward of two hours, while that in the afternoon was exactly similar, except that he then expounded from the New Testament Scriptures."

When Edward Irving's new church was opened by Dr. Chalmers, the equanimity of the great Scottish preacher was sorely tried. "I undertook," said he, "to open Irving's new church in London. There was a prodigious want of tact in the length of his prayers—forty minutes. He said he would assist me by reading a chapter for me. He chose the longest in the Bible, and went on for an hour and a half." At present we need to guard against falling into the opposite extreme to that in which Irving displayed his gift of continuance. The minister must not consent to be entirely governed by the fashion of the hour. Very much depends upon how the service is conducted. It may be short in time and yet seem very long. It may fill up the allotted hour and a half and yet seem only too short. Well-arranged, continuous in plan and purpose, fervid and devout, the service will not tax the patience of the congregation so much as if, lacking those features, the whole lasts for less than sixty minutes. A railroad journey on an ill-laid track, broken by frequent pauses, and by constant stops at way stations, carries you over a few miles only and yet wearies you more than one swift run of four times the length. Have a clear aim in every service. Toward that aim let it move from the first words to the last. Make Abraham your model when he and his family "went forth to go

into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

4. This leads me to glance at the question of proportion in the service. The minister must secure by previous practice and arrangement the timely and proportional introduction of all the parts. Recalling the worship in Trinity Church, Irvine, as it was conducted by Dr. W. B. Robertson, his biographer notes the living form which the service took, "shaped by the artistic mind of the pastor. The three correlatives, as he called them,—praise, prayer, and preaching,—were built up by him on the principle of a progressive unity."[1] This progressive unity does not come by accident. In order to insure it, and just because you have not the help of a set form (such as a liturgy affords), you are bound to prepare for each service with great care. There are ministers who go through the entire service, so far as it is practicable to do so, on the previous Saturday morning. Occasionally this should certainly be done. And always you must keep the various parts of the service and their claims to consideration well in view as the worship proceeds. Do not sing too many stanzas, or read too much Scripture, or prolong unduly the prayers or the sermon. If at any time there is sufficient reason for a longer prayer or a longer sermon than usual, anticipate this by shortening other parts of the service. But as a rule it will not be necessary to do this. The minister is likely to meet the ends

[1] "Robertson of Irvine," by A. Guthrie, p. 246.

of public worship best when he practises generosity in psalmody and economy in preaching. And however this may be, the impression which is left by the whole service should be harmonious.

NOTE. A word as to the announcements which the minister needs to make. We counsel that he take this matter entirely into his own hands. He is responsible for the service, and he will do well to claim and to exercise the vetoing power if he chooses to do so.

In danger of being snowed under by an onset of pulpit notices, the bewildered pastor will often envy the fearless Dr. Robert Lee, of Edinburgh, when he threw down a heap of them with the exclamation, "This pulpit is not the Sunday edition of the 'North British Advertiser.'" Assuredly the minister is under no obligation to announce any meeting outside of his own church which is to be held at an hour when he himself has a religious service. If a notice has to be given, he will do well to be brief and simple in giving it. Do not take the place of advance agent for a show. Do not commit yourself to extravagant laudation. Should you not excel in making announcements, it may even be well to write out what has to be said. The most eloquent of men have blundered over this ungrateful task. It was Robert Hall who gave notice of a missionary meeting in the following words: "Mr. Birt, of Birmingham; Mr. Dyer, of London; Mr. Roberts, of Bristol, and other ministers will be present. The Rev. Richard Ashe,

Esq., will take the chair. Such, my brethren, are the performances to be performed here next week." After a brief pause, by way of escaping from the comedy of errors, he added: "A very important meeting, my brethren, very important indeed, and on a very important occasion. I hope, therefore, you will attend."[1] The best plan is to print week by week, or else, if you need to be more economical, to write and put in a conspicuous place, a church calendar, and content yourself by directing attention to it.

We must in addition enter a protest before closing this chapter, against the habit of distributing printed matter through the pews. This ought never to be done. Of course it is entirely objectionable when a tradesman is permitted to scatter Japanese fans over the church, with his own advertisements gaudily printed upon them; and scarcely less so when the offender is the minister himself, inserting in every hymn book a slip of paper puffing his own books. But even literature which is not mercenary or impertinent should have no place in the pews. There must be nothing to distract the mind or divert the attention of the worshiper. The rocky banks of the river or the giant trees of the forest ought not to be desecrated by advertising nostrums of the quack doctor or the wares of the pushing merchant, but still less should anything be suffered to intrude upon the hour and place devoted to the worship of God.

[1] Trestrail, "College Life in Bristol," pp. 79, 84.

APPENDIX.

The Order of Worship.—The advance in enrichment of worship in non-liturgical churches may be seen from a comparison of the following examples of orders of service.

1. The Puritan model, which is characterized by great simplicity, is not often found to-day in its primitive integrity. 1. Singing (sometimes followed by a brief prayer). 2. First Scripture reading. 3. Prayer. 4. Singing. 5. Second Scripture reading. 6. Singing. 7. Prayer. 8. Notices and Collection. 9. Singing. 10. Sermon. 11. Singing (sometimes preceded by a brief prayer). 12. Benediction.

The commendable features in this arrangement are the congregational character of the service,—and indeed it is generally conducive to hearty congregational singing,—and the two readings of Scripture.

2. The Puritan model, enriched by the substitution of the doxology, followed by the Lord's Prayer repeated by the minister and the congregation, and by a chant, sung by the people led by the choir. 1. Doxology and Lord's Prayer. 2. Scripture reading. 3. Chanting of a psalm. 4. Scripture reading. 5. Chant. 6. Prayer. 7. Hymn. 8. Sermon. 9. Hymn. 10. Concluding prayer and benediction.

3. More elaborate forms. 1. Opening sentences repeated by the minister and people. 2. The introduction early in the service of a prayer of con-

fession. 3. The "amen" sung at the close of each hymn. 4. The use of the "glorias." 5. The introduction of one or more anthems. 6. The reading of the Ten Commandments. 7. The minister hands the offering plates to the ushers, and gives, alternating with the choir, the offertory responses; the plates are received after the offering has been taken, with a brief prayer. 8. The use of the creed, and of other parts of a liturgical service.

Example 1. 1. Organ prelude. 2. Hymns of adoration. 3. The confession. 4. The gloria. 5. The Lord's Prayer. 6. Anthem. 7. The Holy Scriptures. 8. Hymn. 9. Prayer. 10. Hymn. 11. The offering. 12. The Gospel. 13. Anthem. 14. Sermon. 15. Hymn. 16. Benediction.

Example 2. 1. Voluntary. 2. Anthem. 3. The Lord's Prayer. 4. Hymn. 5. First Scripture lesson. 6. Chant. 7. Second Scripture lesson. 8. Anthem. 9. Announcements. 10. Hymn. 11. Sermon. 12. The offering and solo. 13. Hymn. 14. Benediction.

Example 3. 1. Voluntary. 2. Doxology. 3. Lord's Prayer. 4. Anthem. 5. Reading the Commandments. 6. Response by choir. 7. Scripture lesson. 8. Prayer. 9. Collection. 10. Notices. 11. Hymn. 12. Sermon. 13. Hymn. 14. Prayer and benediction with the congregation seated.

In the first of the examples the use of four congregational hymns is to be commended. The second example is taken from the City Temple, London

(Dr. Joseph Parker's), and much of the music which in America would be left to the choir, is shared by the whole congregation. The third example is open to objection that the reading of the Scripture is directly followed by the prayer. It is wiser to have a change of voice between these two important parts of the service.

The disposition to allot to the choir an undue proportion of parts in the service may be seen in :

Example 4. 1. Prelude. 2. Anthem. 3. Invocation followed by Lord's Prayer. 4. Psalm responsively by minister and choir. 5. Hymn. 6. Scripture lesson. 7. Anthem. 8. Prayer. 9. Announcements and offering. 10. Hymn. 11. Sermon. 12. Hymn. 13. Benediction. In some instances one of the hymns is assigned to the choir, leaving still less for the congregation to do.

IV

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

SUMMARY

I. CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP MUST AIM AT IMPRESSION AND EXPRESSION.

1. Impression is especially reached through the reading of the Scriptures and the sermon.
2. Expression is reached through other parts of the service. Here comes in the element of congregational response.

II. THE NEGLECT OF THIS RESPONSIVE ELEMENT IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

1. Evidences of this to be found in the service itself.
2. Evidences of this to be found in the congregation. (1) In dissatisfaction and defection; (2) In indifference and lack of affection for the service.
3. History of Protestantism partly accounts for this neglect.
4. Demand for more expression traced in changes in service.

III. TO WHAT THE DEMAND FOR CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE IS DUE.

1. To a natural instinct.
2. To a true conception of public worship.
3. To the growth of congregational culture.
4. To external influences.
5. To the Sunday-school.
6. To an increase in Christian union.

IV. HOW THE DEMAND MAY BE MET. NOT WISE TO IGNORE IT.

1. By an intelligent maintenance of the Puritan model.
2. By giving to the congregation a larger share in the service. (1) Congregational singing; (2) The responsive reading of the psalm; (3) The recital of the Lord's Prayer; (4) The congregational "amen"; (5) The more general use of the Bibles in the pews.

V. ADVANTAGES ACCRUING FROM THE CULTIVATION OF THIS RESPONSE:

1. To the service. 2. The sermon. 3. The minister. 4. The congregation. 5. Religion at large.

IV

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

I. TWO ends every act of congregational worship must aim to reach. These are impression and expression.

1. The chief purpose served by the reading of the Scripture and by the preaching of the sermon is impression. Through these channels the truth is explained, illustrated, and applied.

2. The chief purpose served by the other parts of the service, by prayer, for instance, and praise, is expression. "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee. They shall sing to thy name."[1] This second purpose is what we have to deal with in this chapter, and it is not easy to overestimate its importance. Upon it all branches of the church have insisted. The liturgy of the Episcopal Church is entitled "The Book of Common Prayer." Through the "Westminster Directory for Worship" the Presbyterian Church declares that "since one primary design of public ordinances is to pay social acts of homage to the most high God, ministers ought to be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with or exclude the more important duties of prayer and praise."

[1] Ps. 66 : 4.

Impression, that is, was not to be indulged at the expense of expression. In congregational churches the minister by saying, "Let us pray," or "Let us sing," gives expression to the conviction that the congregation must be allowed to utter forth its praise in the hymns and its prayers in the audible "amen." However far in our practice we may have wandered from this early conception of what worship demands, these forms keep before us the true conception. So do our hymns, many of which are entirely inappropriate for any but congregational use. James Montgomery furnishes the model for congregational praise when he sings:

> Stand up and bless the Lord,
> Ye people of his choice;
> Stand up and bless the Lord your God,
> With heart and soul and voice.

II. The time has come when attention should be called afresh to the neglect of this responsive element in public worship.

1. Of this neglect the service as it is generally conducted furnishes sufficient evidences. A writer on the subject charges the non-liturgical churches with gradually attenuating public worship until it has reached "a painful, sometimes a ridiculous extreme of thinness. It is the exception that congregations worship. They listen. Their mental attitude is unchanged from beginning to end. They not only listen to the sermon, the prayer is listened to. There is no general participation in worship.

The result is that only those are attracted to church who are interested in good preaching, and who enjoy the singing of a quartette choir."[1] Under this arrangement a popular preacher whose service is famed for its fine music decides to introduce a short liturgy, "being more and more struck either by the unintelligence or the miraculous patience of ordinary congregations."[2] The Rev. A. K. H. Boyd, of St. Andrews, Scotland, after the experience of a long life in the ministry, declared that "he thought one thing that kept the people from taking a greater interest in the services was that the worshipers had too little to do in them." A number of ministers and laymen discussing the subject are not disposed to charge with much exaggeration the description which one of them gives of the service to which he is accustomed, as "a combination from the concert hall and the lecture room, with a little worship thrown in."

2. Further evidence of this neglect of the responsive element in public worship may be found in the congregation itself.

(1) Very often it happens that persons dissatisfied with the service as it is now ordinarily conducted in the non-liturgical churches, go elsewhere. It is the opinion of many who have studied this subject that it is "the emphasis on worship that holds the masses of the people in the continental countries of Europe so true to the Papal Church; and in

[1] "Andover Review," Vol. II., Sept., 1882.
[2] Dr. Joseph Parker, City Temple, London.

America it is this that has been the chief reason of the growth of the Episcopal Church, despite its prelacy and sacramentarianism." Professor Park, of Andover, welcoming the same ritual, refreshed by the same liturgy, and listening to the same chant in Cairo, in Jerusalem, in Boston, gives it as his opinion that "the services of this church are faithful to its history, and here is one secret of its power." The service of the Episcopal Church touches the gracious nature of Thomas Erskine, of Linlathan, although bred in Puritanism. He says: "It brings us all so much into one, and it makes the minister so much the mouth and the leader of the people, instead of lifting him out from the people, and making him the only doer of anything in the church." [1]

(2) That this natural craving for a responsive share in public worship has not been adequately met by us is further shown by the indifference and the lack of enthusiastic loyalty to the service on the part of so many in the churches. "Congregationalists," it is said by one of their own number, "are bound together more by the simplicity, not to say barrenness, of their forms of worship than by the adequacy and richness of their doctrinal teaching." [2] The young people cherish little affection for the service, apart from their association of it with some one minister whose prayers, reading of the Scriptures, or general spirit impresses them favorably. Nor can it be said that their elders regard the

[1] "Letters of Thomas Erskine," p. 196.
[2] President Hyde, Bowdoin College.

service in which they have so slight a share with the same attachment that is felt by those who are accustomed to a liturgical form of worship.

In general it may be true to say that the ordinary service too often leaves the worshiper with a sense of something lacking yet. The æsthetic faculty has very likely been ministered to by the music, and the intellect interested in the sermon; even the spiritual nature may have been touched by the prayers, if well-compacted, well-worded, and devout. But the craving for personal expression has been sparsely met, if met at all, and perhaps the worshiper goes away from the service with the sigh of the psalmist: "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"[1]

3. It concerns us little at the present time that one main reason for this neglect of the responsive element in public worship is to be found in the history of Protestantism. Without any question, Protestantism represents the revolt of the Reformers against the ritual and sacerdotalism of Rome. Even the Reformers, however, were not entirely agreed as to how far this revolt should be carried. Luther held that everything was permissible in the service of the house of God, except what was forbidden by the Bible, and the Anglicans have shared with the Lutherans the same view.[2] Zwingli and

[1] Ps. 42 : 1. [2] "The Congregational Idea of Worship," by Williston Walker, Ph. D, pp. 6, 7.

Calvin, going a step farther, believed nothing should be practised in public worship but what was expressly sanctioned by the word of God. The Puritans represented that view in England, and later in America. The dread of popery need not preclude our using the most praiseworthy secret of its strength. Nor are we haunted, as were the New England churches of the seventeenth century, by a horror of that liturgy which had been forced upon their fathers at the edge of the sword.

The demand that this responsive impulse in our natures be satisfied in public worship comes, in many instances, from the descendants of the Puritans, from the very men who reverence their history and emulate their spirit.[1] It is they who crave that more sympathy be shown in our service for this instinct of reverence and this craving for common worship. It is one of them who declares his conviction that "our defects in church service are traceable to the dominance of intellect over feeling."[2] "Our services are barren," says Henry Ward Beecher, "not from any want of common forms of devotion, but from the want of common sympathy. A church has a right to the gifts of every one of its members, and the minister is set to disclose and develop them." Others besides George Eliot have shared her feeling at Nuremburg, when she writes:[3] "We turned into the famous St. Sebald's for a minute, where a Protestant cler-

[1] *Cf.* Dr. W. J. Tucker, "Yale Lectures," p. 126.
[2] "Life of W. F. Stevenson," p. 84. [3] "Life," p. 370.

gyman was reading in a cold, formal way under the grand Gothic arches. Then we went to the Catholic church, the Frauen Kirche, where the organ and voices were giving forth a glorious mass, and we stood with a feeling of brotherhood among the standing congregation till the last note of the organ had died out."

4. The successive changes in the direction of a responsive service furnish the most convincing proof of the power of this demand for fuller expression in our congregational worship. It is a far cry, indeed, from the era of Puritan plainness to the order of service adopted in many of our churches at the present time. There is, however, scarcely an innovation over which there has not been a struggle. The hymn has won its place in the teeth of an opposition which has objected that no common act of worship should be tolerated in a mixed congregation, composed of professedly Christian persons and those who have made no such profession. The reading of the Bible without any comment was sturdily condemned by the men who, with a bitter remembrance of an enforced liturgy, insisted that all book worship savored of popery. But in the course of this century the non-liturgical congregations have grown accustomed to the responsive reading of a psalm, or better still, to a chant, in which all are invited to join, to the public repetition of the Lord's Prayer, to the use of the gloria, to the Ten Commandments read by the minister and followed by a congregational response. All these are concessions

made by the Puritan ideal, not to the spirit which demands an enrichment of service, such as is furnished by the anthem, for example, but to the craving on the part of the congregation for a more active part in the public worship of God.

III. It may be well at this point to inquire to what this demand for congregational response is due.

1. From what has been already said it may be inferred that, in the first place, it can be traced to a natural instinct. To possess a faculty for the expression of religious emotions and not to use it, is unnatural. The sense of wrong under which the suppression of that faculty labors will be ten-fold increased if it be wakened to vigorous life by the day, the place, and the service devoted to religion. The sufferings of Joseph were aggravated indeed, when, cast into the pit in which there was not even a drop of water to assuage his thirst, he saw his brethren sit down to eat bread. Longing, perhaps, for just such audible expression as we are discussing, Daniel Macmillan found his way into a church which gave him a chance to join heartily in its responses, and almost at once it won his affection. "It seemed," says he, "so true to my nature that my whole heart could find utterance then."[1]

2. Nor need it be denied that we are coming to a truer conception of what public worship must be. In one word, it must be common worship. The service must be so arranged that the worshiper can

[1] "Life," p. 74.

give frequent audible expression to his emotions of penitence, gratitude, joy, and aspiration. The temple service in Jerusalem (the one divine model for worship) was highly responsive. "The people had their large vocal part in the worship. A great orchestra of trumpets and cymbals, psaltery and harps, accompanying the trained voices of the Levites, swelled the volume of praise. 'All the children of Israel fell down on their faces to the ground, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.' And as the psalm was chanted describing God's marvelous works of creation and providence, still the people gave back their glad multitudinous chorus: 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.' Sang the priests: 'Who overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red sea; who smote great kings, and slew mighty kings; Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan.' And after each clause, came rolling back the earthquake shout of the people, 'For his mercy endureth for ever.'"

3. Probably there is also among us to-day an increase in congregational culture. The eighteenth century and the century which preceded it saw little enough of this, even in the churches where a liturgy was used. Often the services, as they are described by George Fox and Samuel Pepys, and later by John Wesley and William Cowper, were lamentably deficient in decorum, to say nothing of devoutness. The Episcopal Church service of to-day is very unlike that which was familiar to Fielding and

Hogarth. It furnishes less food for the pen or the brush satirist, but far more for the heart and mind of the worshiper. Among the churches which use the freer form, this advance in culture registers its growth in the better architecture of the church, in the greater thought and care bestowed on the conduct of the service, and in the improved selections of hymns which are used. Worship has become, in most cases, statelier and more settled. Our best services are now almost as uniform as though a liturgy were employed. But meanwhile the power of the Methodist revival has died away, the congregation is no longer encouraged to give emotional response to its feelings, the stated as well as the impromptu "amen" is not heard any longer, and the people often seek in vain for some channel through which their emotions may flow.

4. The lack of this is felt all the more as we are influenced by other forms of worship. At opposite extremes we note two: the liturgical, which is represented by the services in Roman and Anglican churches, and the revivalistic, which in the last twenty-five years has become better organized than it was formerly, and in which the singing of Mr. Sankey and those who have followed him, and the still more rousing choruses of the Salvation Army, whatever else they have done, have certainly given every worshiper an opportunity for response.

5. The Sunday-school is little more than a century old. In the form most familiar to us it is still younger. To the causes which have done much to stimulate

the demand for congregational response, it may be safe to add the unconscious influence of the Sunday-school. In many schools there is now a carefully prepared service, much of which is responsive, the united repetition of the Lord's Prayer is common, and even the Apostles' Creed may sometimes be heard, while the reading of the lesson for the day in response by the superintendent and classes has prepared the people to seek in the congregation at least as much liberty as is accorded to the school.

6. Are we not also warranted in concluding that the growth within our own times of Christian union has disposed each branch of the church to profit by the excellencies of all the rest? The decline in sectarian bitterness, which is widely different from loyalty to the truth as we may hold it, has brought many of the great denominations of Christendom within sight of each other. The baptistery may now be found in Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. In the Christian activity which quite as much as Christian thought distinguishes this century, all who love the Lord Jesus Christ have been drawn together. It would be strange, indeed, if Congregationalism, which, being bound by no rubric, is open to adapt what is best wherever it is found, should not have seen that elsewhere and with great power in other denominations than its own, the craving for congregational response is happily met, and that beyond its own borders there are materials which it can with advantage build into its public worship.

IV. It remains for us to inquire how this demand for Congregational Response may be met.

The subject has received much attention of late. As far back as 1886, the Congregational Union of England and Wales discussed the question, "whether, without injury to the simplicity and spirituality of the public worship of the churches, any new methods can be adopted which shall enable the people to take a more active part in the services than at present." To-day the non-liturgical churches are more alive than they have been in the past to the necessity for giving the congregation a larger share in the public worship of God.

Of course it is possible to meet this demand for congregational response unfavorably. It may be either wholly ignored or frowned down as unworthy of the history and traditions of the free churches. Those who take this position aver that any attempt to shift the emphasis in worship from the minister to the people is due to an unworthy disposition to imitate the liturgical communions. They further insist that it indicates a decline in vital religion. The fervor, they say, of earlier days has died out, a critical spirit has grown up, which has been encouraged by wider culture in the home and school, and so with finer churches, more expensive organs and choirs, a wealthier membership, and a closer union with the world, piety has declined. Such considerations as these are deserving of careful notice. Undoubtedly the increase in wealth and

worldly position is not favorable to spiritual religion. The growth of worldliness has always tended to swell the ranks of the churches which have set a higher value upon position than upon piety. But, on the other hand, those who argue in favor of congregational response are by no means to be confounded with those who advocate what is called enrichment of service. Indeed, the one of these may be in conflict with the other. An anthem enriches the service, but if, by appealing to the æsthetic faculty, it rouses the critical spirit, if, that is, it invites the worshiper to listen rather than to participate, then it distinctly dissipates the element of congregational response and breaks the continuity of the worship.

1. Let it be granted at once, therefore, that the craving for congregational response may be met by a resolute and yet intelligent maintenance of the Puritan model. Admitting the superior stateliness and dignity of the liturgical service, we may well insist that the real object of worship is not to satisfy the sense of beauty in those who take part in it, but to hold communion with God and learn better how to do his will. "The true wisdom of those who have to conduct the free worship of Congregational churches," says Dr. R. W. Dale, "is to strive for the kind of perfection which is appropriate to it."[1] The objection that in extemporaneous prayer the congregation is too dependent on the mind and mood of the minister, is not met by urging

[1] See "A Manual of Congregational Principles," by R. W. Dale.

that the same may be said as to the sermon. But it is evident that the minister ought to be made to feel that during the whole service so much does depend upon the minister that he will need to live under a most solemn and weighty sense of his obligation. If the service is to retain the Puritan simplicity it must retain also the Puritan fervor. It need not pass beyond the limits dear to the meeting-houses of the early Noncomformists of Great Britain and the early colonists of New England; it may confine itself to singing and prayer, and the reading of the Bible and the sermon; and yet it may be made rich and full. There are still many churches in which this simplicity is maintained, where at the same time it is easy to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness with the intelligent and earnest devotion of heart and voice.

2. The desire on the part of the people for a larger share in the service may be met by a wise infusion of the responsive element.

(1) By all means encourage congregational singing. No hymn intended for the people should be usurped by the choir. In the city of Geneva, at the time he so largely controlled its interests, John Calvin, fearing for the fate of any service in which the congregation having nothing to do would become critical, cultivated congregational singing. The experience of subsequent centuries has justified his foresight. The less a congregation does, the less devout it is apt to become. It is tempted to put itself outside of the service and play the part

of the connoisseur. So the spirit of devout communion dies out before the chill breath of discerning criticism. At the present time there is among us a wholesome reaction in the direction of the congregational psalmody which gives such heartiness to the services in many Lutheran churches. "The simple and ancient tunes which the German people sing in their churches," to quote from an intelligent student on this subject, "are very beautiful. There is an increasing tendency in the best churches, in this country and abroad, toward a style of church music that is nearer the wants of the people. The more of reality in the service of song, the less need to multiply tunes and to give them highly artistic character. I asked a cultivated German, who had spent some years in the United States, why it was that so many were accustomed to join in singing in the German churches. He replied, 'It is because we use the old hymns and the old tunes.'"[1]

(2) The congregation may be trained to the responsive reading of the Psalms. Originally antiphonal, we take one step toward restoring the Psalter to its true place when we use it responsively. I say one step, because finality is by no means reached when this is done. The Psalms should be chanted, and the congregation should have their full share in this exercise.

In passing, it may be said that to the alternate reading by the minister and the congregation of

[1] "The Christ of Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," E. H. Byington, p. 133.

other parts of Scripture than the Psalms, there are serious objections. The responsive reading of the Psalms was probably at first a compromise made by the Reformed Anglican Church. It was intended to set the people to doing what in the older service had been done by the singers. "Responsive reading in the Anglican communion was a mere expedient of necessity. So that church has regarded it, and has sought earnestly and persistingly to remove this necessity, and in England, it is understood, with success. So that to-day, in general, the responsive reading of the Psalms has ceased, and singing has been restored to its rightful function in this part of worship."[1] But the other parts of the Bible were not intended to be sung. They are to be read by one voice, so as not to break up the continuous sense, and so as to preserve the character of this part of the service as impressive rather than expressive.

(3) The recital of the Lord's Prayer aloud by the minister and the people will also conduce to congregational response. To this the people need to be trained. Already it is common in the Sunday-school. Let it be used in the week-evening prayer meetings. Request the deacons and those who are accustomed to speak, to lead the congregation in clear and distinct tones. It may be interesting to note that in the "Directory for the Public Worship of God," issued by the Westminster Assembly in 1643, and intended to take the place of the Episco-

[1] "New Englander," January, 1882.

pal rubric, "no stated prayer was commended except that given by our Lord." In early New England, however, "so great was the dislike to anything that savored of the bondage of the Church of England that even the Lord's Prayer was seldom employed." The objection in this instance seems not to have been to the use of the prayer in public worship, save as it was associated with a political tyranny which had driven them and their fathers into exile; and this objection happily holds no longer.

(4) Certainly it would be well to restore to the people the use of the congregational amen. That the original intention was for all the people to say amen is evident from Scripture.[1] It has been conjectured that in the New Testament a reference to the same custom among the early believers is to be found in the words, "That with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and it is certain that in another passage the apostle alludes to it as customary.[2] The early church grafted the practice into its congregational worship. In the second century Justin Martyr wrote: "Then we all rise together and pray, and when our prayer is ended, bread and wine are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayer and thanksgiving, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, 'Amen.'" In our own times, while the use of the amen has been more characteristic of the Methodist congregations, it is certain that it has also been encour-

[1] Deut. 27 : 14, 15; 1 Chron. 16 : 36; Ps. 106 : 48. [2] Rom. 15 : 6; 1 Cor. 14 : 16.

aged by individual Baptist churches. In the records of a church in Yorkshire, England, in the year 1800, we read: "Desired that those who approve of the prayers signify their approbation by an audible 'Amen';" which leads us to say that this response will naturally be called forth by prayer which is congregational. Let the minister be careful so to pray that all the people may say "Amen."

(5) Congregational response of the truest sort, that is to say, of the heart and mind, will be promoted if congregational interest is maintained. To this end encourage a more general use of Bibles among the people. During the public reading of the Scriptures train them to follow you from their own Bibles. Accustom them to look up the text of your sermon when it is announced, and during the discourse to follow your references to passages of Scriptures confirmatory of what you are saying. Not the least advantage in doing this will be that you yourself will be delivered from handling the word of God deceitfully, from taking a text only to leave it, and so exposing yourself to the same condemnation as the Scottish preacher of whom one of his hearers complained that "he had lost his ground an hour before, and had been just swimming ever since."

V. In closing our consideration of a subject upon which the last word has by no means been spoken yet, it may be well to glance at the benefits which will follow the cultivation of the responsive element in public worship.

1. The whole service will feel its influence, and will become hearty, continuous, and measurably complete.

2. The sermon will also be the better for it if it helps to cherish more of that sympathy which should exist between a speaker and his hearers. If the congregation comes to the sermon in a devout, exalted frame of feeling, the preaching cannot be what it is when the exercises preceding the sermon only consume so much time and power of attention.[1] For the minister himself, the responsive tones of the people will do much to remove the sensation of isolation, and to banish the nervousness due to a feeling that he is not one of the people so much as one apart from them.

3. The sound of many voices will be as stimulating and bracing as the sound of many waters. The minister will himself worship with his people and not only on their behalf. As it is, he is often startled at hearing any other voice than his own, and the amen of a worshiper more devout than decorous is as disturbing to him as was the response of the old Duke of Cambridge to the chaplain who was conducting the service in his presence, when in answer to the minister's words, "Let us pray," he replied with a voice stronger than his mind, "By all means."

4. By such changes in the service as we have suggested, the sane and wholesome instinct to join in audible expression will be largely satisfied.

[1] "Andover Review," Sept., 1884, p. 296.

"We need," as Horace Bushnell says, "to keep fixed times, or appointed rounds of observances, as truly as to be in holy impulses; to have prescribed periods of duty as truly as to have a spirit of duty; to be in the drill of observance as well as in the liberty of faith."[1] And the congregation will feel that thrill of fellowship without which, indeed, it is no congregation, but only an accidental assemblage of individuals. Recalling his sensations when Frederick Denison Maurice conducted divine worship, Thomas Hughes expresses what many of us who remember Maurice felt: "The way in which we all joined in the responses (irresistibly, I suppose, because we felt it was a privilege which we must exercise) gave me a strong feeling of fellowship which I have rarely felt in any other congregation."

5. It need hardly be said that this fellowship must be of great service to the cause of religion at large. Our personal enjoyment of the life that is hid with Christ in God is very much influenced by the general expression of religion among those who are about us. When these congregational utterances express the united testimonies of many devout souls, our own faith will be quickened and the earthly worship in which we engage will be rich and full in the very elements which give to the elders praising the Lamb such a mighty volume of harmonious testimony.

[1] Horace Bushnell's Sermons: "Routine Observances Indispensable."

V

PUBLIC PRAYER

SUMMARY

THE PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC PRAYER.

A careful preparation for public prayer is urged:

1. From the importance of the act itself.
2. From the unsatisfactory character of many public prayers.
3. From the effect produced when public prayer is what it should be.

I. DEVOTIONAL PREPARATION.

1. Personal preparation.
2. Preparation Godward.
3. Preparation manward.

COUNSELS.

1. Have a special time in the week reserved for this preparation.
2. Have within easy reach books which will help your devotions.
3. Let your mind be free from the routine of church work.

II. INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION.

1. In the language to be used: (1) Analyze the prayers of the Bible; (2) Study models of prayer; (3) Form a collection of materials for prayer; (4) Sometimes it may be well to write out a prayer.
2. In the subjects to be touched upon: (1) The principal prayer should be very inclusive; (2) To insure this, foresight will be needed; (3) Train people to send notes, to make notes during week.

NOTE. A list of books which may be recommended.

V

PUBLIC PRAYER

UPON no parts of the public service should the minister bestow more pains than upon those which are distinctively devotional. A careful Preparation for Congregational Prayer may be urged for the following reasons:

1. From the importance of the act itself. The definition of prayer in the Shorter Catechism is admirable: "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." To Coleridge the act of praying was "the very highest energy of which the human heart was capable, praying, that is, with the concentration of the faculties." Emerson touches on another aspect of the prayer, but one not less important, when he speaks of it as "the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view." Evidently to pray with profit and power is by no means easy. An English bishop considered that no man was likely to do much good in prayer who did not begin by looking at it "in the light of a work to be prepared for and persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear on subjects which are, in

our opinion, at once most interesting and most necessary." The same estimate of the true character of the act is summed up in fewer words by Chalmers when he speaks of the intense business-like spirit of the prayers of Philip Doddridge.[1]

2. Nor, we are bound to add, is the need of a careful preparation on the part of the minister less evident if he considers the unsatisfactory character of very much public prayer. So impressed with this was one of the ablest pastors of the past generation in New England that he feared that "public prayer was fast becoming a lost art."[2] The craving for a liturgy is not often found when public extemporaneous prayer is what it should be, but only when it is full of vain repetition, devoid of unction, unsympathetic, inadequate to the needs of the congregation, and lacking in reverence and dignity. These are the blemishes in extemporaneous prayer against which the Westminster Directory of Worship as long ago as the seventeenth century warned the ministers of the Presbyterian Church, even going so far as to recommend that manuals be studied "that the prayers may be performed with dignity and propriety, as well as to the profit of those who join in them, and that this important service may not be disgraced by mean, irregular, or extravagant effusions." In the discussions on the subject at the time when this utterance was made, it was clearly recognized that there was a middle way betwixt set forms and extemporaneous prayers. "I plead

[1] Stanford, "Doddridge," p. 175. [2] Dr. Leonard Bacon.

for neither," said one of the leaders in the debate, "but for studied prayers."[1] Dr. Edward Payson, whose ministry was marked by such rare spiritual power, found reason for saying, "Our devotional performances are too often cold and spiritless; as the heart did not assist in composing, it disdains to aid in attuning them. They have almost as much of a form as if we made use of a liturgy, while the peculiar excellences of a liturgy are wanting." Without doubt what his biographer remarks about William George Ward is true of many other worshipers: "A public prayer which did not appeal to him led to irritation and distraction."[2] When an outraged and outspoken Western man went swinging out of a famous Eastern college chapel one Sunday morning, exclaiming "Great Scott, what praying," we can more readily forgive his bluntness than the petition which provoked it, and which ran thus: "We thank thee that all men are thy children, and that when we love men we love thee, when we think highly of human powers we praise thee; when we worship human genius we are not idolaters as our fathers thought."[3] No country has more resolutely opposed set forms of prayer than Scotland; but Dr. A. K. H. Boyd urges, with reason, that they are to be preferred to the prayers which are purely impromptu, and he illustrates his contention by extracts from the prayers of contemporary

[1] "The Westminster Assembly," A. F. Mitchell, D. D., p. 229.
[2] "Memoirs of the Oxford Movement," Wilfrid Ward, p. 93.
[3] "Life of Dr. S. Wells Williams," p. 480.

ministers, which certainly warrant his protest. The proverbial caution of his countrymen found expression in one instance in the words: "It must be acknowledged that hitherto thy people have been in a sad minority, but we look on to the day when they shall be in an overwhelming majority"; and patriotic pride dictated a version of certain words of Jesus which were neither authorized nor revised, when the same minister said, "For, as thou knowest, men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of the national emblem."

3. But when public extemporaneous prayer is what it should be, without question no part of the service is more profitable. "People learn more what prayer is and how to pray," said Dr. Kirk, "in hearing one real prayer than by all the sermons and talks they ever heard or will hear, and all the tracts they will ever read on the subject."[1] "Without any straining after oratorical effect," says one of his occasional hearers, "Dr. Maclaren's voice and manner at once arrested attention; the stillness that prevailed seemed a matter of course. The preliminary prayers were so fresh and thoughtful as at once to suggest careful preparation. They had the ring of genuineness, and must have passed for the spiritual currency of very many present." We cease to marvel at the power in prayer of John Knox when we find that he considered it to be "an earnest and familiar talking with God," and the spiritual influence which George Fox exerted is to

[1] "Life of Dr. Edward Kirk," p. 328.

a large part explained when we hear William Penn saying of him: "The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer. And truly it was a testimony he knew more and lived nearer to the Lord than other men: for they that know him most will see most reason to approach him with reverence and fear."[1] A lady going to Dr. Payson's church in the expectation of seeing Lafayette, was lifted far above curiosity by an intercessory prayer which "differed from all she had ever heard, in richness and appropriateness of matter as well as in fervor of utterance," and when she ventured to ask Dr. Payson for a copy of it, she was surprised to learn that it had vanished with the breath which gave it utterance.[2] In the same way, Sir James Mackintosh, led by some unexpected circumstance to hear Edward Irving just after he settled in London, was arrested by the phrase, "thrown upon the fatherhood of God," which the preacher used in pleading for an unknown family of orphans belonging to the obscure congregation. He repeated the words to Canning, the first statesman of his time, who in his turn went to hear Irving, and a few nights after, in the House of Commons, spoke in such high terms of his eloquence that the rank and fashion of London flocked to listen to him.[3] A prayer which Irving's earlier associate, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, offered

[1] "George Fox," by Thomas Hodgkin, p. 275.
[2] Cumming's "Memoir of Payson," p. 240.
[3] Oliphant's "Life of Irving," p. 120.

when Edinburgh was threatened with cholera, brought a note from one of the judges of the Court of Session, begging that it might be given to the press, so that general prejudice against the means taken to avert the scourge might be allayed "by the solemn appeal to Almighty God put by one so justly entitled to public confidence and respect."[1] In his prayers it was said of Robert Murray McCheyne that "he held such reverential and endearing communion with God,—he pressed so near the throne, there was something so filial in his 'Abba Father,' so express and urgent and hopeful were his supplications,—that it was awakening to hear him pray." Of McCheyne's friend and fellow-laborer, William C. Burns, his biographer remarks: "During the first prayer you felt as if the light of the other world struck his face." Using though he did a liturgy, Frederick Denison Maurice was manifestly conscious that he was leading the prayers of the special congregation then present, while at the same time "his whole manner and voice showed that he was completely absorbed in the actual communion of thought with the unseen." Robertson of Irvine was but a stripling when he succeeded to a venerable pastor: "When I saw him mount the pulpit stairs," said one of his hearers, "I felt indignant that one so young should presume to teach a church, but when I heard his prayer, I felt that the most aged might sit at his feet."[2] President Way-

[1] Hanna's "Life of Chalmers," Vol. II., p. 250.
[2] Guthrie's "Robertson of Irvine," p. 56.

land, spending a Sunday in Liverpool and attending the service at Dr. Raffles' church, wrote: "In prayer Dr. Raffles was delightful; devotional, calm, earnest, but solemn, particular, but not familiar. It raised the souls of the people to God, and kept them near the throne." An old woman who was a member of Dr. Dale's church, at Birmingham, while she confessed that she could not understand his sermons, added, "But his prayers do me so much good that I always come."[1] This was the testimony of one who had worshiped at that church until use had become a second nature; but how the casual hearer also may be affected is illustrated by the fact that Dr. C. L. Goodell, of St. Louis, who excelled in congregational prayer, once received at the close of a morning service the following note, written in pencil on the back of a telegram blank, and sent by the hand of one of the ushers: "God bless you for your prayer for the strangers present. Three of us, and many miles from home. God bless us all. Excuse the pencil and paper. Signed, An Operator."[2]

Enough has been said in urging the great importance of careful preparation on the part of the minister before engaging in public prayer. This preparation should be both devotional and intellectual.

I. There should be Devotional Preparation for public prayer.

1. Your first duty will be to make your own

[1] "Life of Dr. Dale," p. 644. [2] "Life of C. L. Goodell, D. D., p. 374.

heart ready by private communion with God. This personal preparation is indeed of the utmost importance. With King David you must go in and sit before the Lord.[1] With Daniel the prophet before the Lord you must pray and confess your sins, and present your supplications.[2] Spurgeon commends the preparation of the heart, the solemn consideration beforehand of the importance of prayer, meditation upon the needs of men's souls, and a remembrance of the promises which we are to plead.[3] Even more than the sermon, Dr. W. M. Taylor thinks that "the prayer requires preparation. It needs the culture of the heart. The devotion of the pulpit must have its roots back in the closet. The habits of the life will fill a reservoir from which the exercises of the sanctuary will be easily supplied."[4]

2. This personal preparation will also give you preparation Godward. To utter the resolve, "I will sing, yea, I will sing praises even with my glory,"[5] is to have already gathered up all your powers in the glad declaration, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

3. From this point you can survey the whole world, lying in the light of God's purposes. Do not be satisfied with your preparation until you find yourself in full accord with his will. Charge your soul "with the most exalted conception of a con-

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[1] 2 Sam. 7 : 18. [2] Dan. 9 : 20.
[3] Spurgeon, "Lectures to My Students," I., IV.
[4] Taylor, "Yale Lectures," p. 241. [5] Ps. 108 : 1.

gregation of people, filled with the vision of God's glory ; each heart overawed, elevated, enraptured with the sight, like Abraham and Moses speaking with the Eternal, face to face."[1] This threefold preparation—selfward, Godward, manward—should be your first and chief occupation in the anticipation of leading the people in public prayer. It is almost impossible to insist too strenuously on this preparation of the heart, or to exaggerate its value. In his quaint way, John Trapp, the commentator, puts the matter with refreshing clearness when he says : "God respecteth not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are ; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how neat they are ; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they are ; nor the music of our prayers, how melodious they are ; nor the logic of our prayers, how methodical they are ; but the divinity of our prayers, how heart-sprung they are. Not gifts, but graces prevail in prayer."

There is force as well as beauty in Payson's thoughts upon the same subject : "That public prayer may produce its proper and designed effects upon the hearts of our hearers, it should be, if I may so express it, a kind of devout poetry. As in poetry, so in prayer, the whole subject-matter should be furnished by the heart ; and the understanding should be allowed only to shape and arrange the effusions of the heart in the manner best adapted to answer the end designed."[2]

[1] "Memoir," p. 246. [2] "Dr. Kirk's Life," p. 329.

COUNSELS.

1. We counsel, therefore, that you reserve a special time in the week for the preparation. Let your Sabbath begin with the sunset on Saturday, and keep the hours of that evening sacred from social or even public engagements.

2. It may be well to have near at hand books which will help your devotions. Catch the glow of Samuel Rutherford from his matchless "Letters," and the fire of Richard Baxter from his "Reformed Pastor." Bring yourself anew under the spell of that classic in the literature of prayer, "The Still Hour," of Professor Austin Phelps. Let the devout thoughts of A. J. Gordon, or F. B. Meyer, or Andrew Murray, stimulate or soothe your heart.

3. This season of preparation, on the eve of the Sunday's work, must find you with a heart at leisure from itself. You must have the sermons ready, all the arrangements for the services completed. The routine of church work must not intrude here, nor the shadow of any needed mental discipline be suffered to fall across your spirit.

II. This is not to say that the quiet hour on Saturday evening may not in part be given to Intellectual Preparation for public prayer. It may. Now is the time to tune the lips as well as to inspire the heart. Your intellectual preparation should be to the full as conscientious for the prayer as for the sermon.

1. First, let us observe that there should be preparation in the Language to be used.

(1) To this end it is wise to make a collection of the prayers of the Bible. Arrange them in order in a note book. Begin with the prayers of the Old Testament. Abraham, Moses and Jabez, David and Solomon, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, Ezra and Nehemiah, with the prophets Isaiah, Daniel, Jonah, and Habakkuk.

Then study the prayers of Jesus. Let them fall under the three natural divisions of those that have special reference to himself, those that he offered for believers, and the Lord's Prayer. In the Lord's Prayer, if carefully analyzed, you will find in germ almost all the material for your congregational prayer. Some one has said, "It embodies a catholic spirit in its 'Our Father,' a reverential spirit in its 'Hallowed be thy name,' an obedient spirit in its 'Thy will be done,' a dependent spirit in its 'Give us this day our daily bread,' a penitent and forgiving spirit in its 'Lead us not into temptation,' and an adoring spirit in its 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.'"[1]

Go on to gather together for the same purpose the other prayers of the New Testament; the prayers offered by the early church as found in the Acts of the Apostles, and the prayers of Paul.

Then complete your collection by adding the large number of benedictions which are to be found in the Old and New Testament.

[1] See Baldwin, "Forty-one Years' Pastorate," p. 212.

(2) Later models will also be of assistance. There is a stately and majestic movement in the Collects of the Episcopal Prayer-book. Theodore Parker has left prayers which, if too florid, are rarely out of tune with the natural world. George Dawson, of Birmingham, England, used language which he carefully selected by a study of the great writers of the golden age in English literature. For their entire absence of any rhetorical artifices the prayers of Henry Ward Beecher are worthy of study, and much can be learned from the direct and vigorous language of C. H. Spurgeon.

(3) It will be well to have a manuscript book into which you can paste selections from these and other prayers, so as to be able to use them in your preparation for public worship; the foundation of the collection being laid in the prayers of the Bible already enumerated.

(4) There may even be times when to write out a prayer will be a profitable exercise. Certainly phrases, sentences, and special words for special occasions may need to be composed beforehand.[1] The prayer thus studied will not be read in public, but the drill and discipline of writing it will influence the minister when he leads the devotions of the people. We need not differ with Mr. Spurgeon when he declares that "ready-made prayers always seem very much like ready-made clothes, which being meant to fit everybody very seldom fit any-

[1] G. A. Smith, D. D., "Life of Henry Drummond," p. 56. "Life of C. L. Goodell, D. D.," pp. 189, 194.

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body," but on the other hand we do well to remember that Dr. Chalmers prepared, wrote out, and even read the brief prayer which preceded his lectures when he was a university professor. "It does not follow," says Dr. McCrie, among the most intelligent and uncompromising defenders of non-liturgical worship in later times, "from our not praying by a set form that we must pray extempore."[1] To write out their prayers, "was the practice of some of the most godly ministers the Church of Scotland has ever had, who, though gifted with readiness of utterance and facility of devotional expressions, and satisfied if in their more private ministrations they could arrange their thoughts and prepare their hearts, yet in the stated services of the sanctuary made conscience of writing down beforehand the substance of their prayers as well as their sermons, though they were no more in the habit of reading the latter than the former."[2]

Probably we should be disposed to agree with Dr. S. M. Hopkins when he says: "The conclusion reached by eminent members of both liturgical and non-liturgical churches is that a system that should unite the propriety and dignity of venerable form with the flexibility and adaptation to occasions of free prayer would be superior to any existing method."[3] And certainly the wise words of the author of "The Tongues of Fire" should put us on our guard against forming any hasty judgment on

[1] Mitchell, "The Westminster Assembly," p. 230.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 230, 231.
[3] See "Kern," p. 31.

this subject. "He who never uses a form in public prayer, casts away the wisdom of the past. He who will use only forms casts away the hope of utterance to be given by the Spirit at present, and even shuts up the future in the stiff hand of the past. Whatever church forbids a Christian congregation, no matter what may be their fears, troubles, joys, or special and pressing need, ever to send up prayer to God except in words framed by other men in other ages, uses an authority which was never delegated. To object to all forms is narrowness. To doom a Christian temple to be a place wherein a simple and impromptu cry may never arise to heaven, is superstition."[1]

2. We may further observe that there should be preparation in the Subjects to be touched upon.

(1) The principal prayer in the morning service should be very inclusive, and in order to insure this and at the same time to avoid prolixity, careful preparation is necessary. An American writer says of Mr. Spurgeon's prayer: "He will rivet the attention and catch the ear of his hearers by speaking of that which has been uppermost in their minds during the week, and then lead them to those which ought to be of all importance to them while engaged in the service of the sanctuary. Spurgeon prays as if he were in the presence of Him whom he addresses, and the hearers melt into silence, for they feel that the Ruler of the universe must be present, and that the place is indeed holy. When

[1] Arthur, "Tongues of Fire," p. 21.

he prays for London, it seems as if the portals of his soul were all thrown open, and every power were brought into living fellowship with the mighty Spirit of God, and that he is making that soul every moment mightier in its apprehension of God. Mr. Spurgeon evidently studies his prayers, as to subject-matter, before coming to the service, and then they are delivered with the greatest freedom of expression."

(2) To secure inclusiveness in this prayer some foresight is needed. It will be well that you train the people to send you notes during the week specifying the things which they wish mentioned by you in public prayer. Sickness, recovery, bereavement, new experiences in life, these, and many similar incidents in the daily course of members of your congregation should be remembered at this time. Cotton Mather took "the bills that were put up for prayer" to his study and prayed for each person separately. The Episcopal prayers include special petitions for members of the congregation and their friends. Within the memory of many of us such personal requests were sent up to the minister before the morning prayer, to be included in his supplications. A custom so worthy of preservation ought not to have fallen into disuse. The pastor's letter box, in the vestibule of the church, may be of good service in receiving these special requests for prayer.

3. In addition to this, we counsel that during the week you note down matters which you should re-

member in prayer, such as will be furnished by your pastoral calls, by the daily newspapers, and by the life of the community in which you are settled. A sheet of paper lying on your study table may be used on which to make these occasional memoranda, and on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, you will find that it will be an easy matter to divide up and classify your material. The retrospect of the week will enable you to pray with point as well as power for things which are personal in the life of the home, or of interest in the life of the church, or momentous in the life of the nation.

We would further recommend that you study such aids to public prayer as are furnished by the literature of the subject. Invaluable hints may be found in Mr. Spurgeon's "Lectures to my Students," and among other books on prayer to be recommended are the following: "Thoughts on Prayer," by W. E. Winks, London, Religious Tract Society; Beecher's "Aids to Prayer"; "Aids to Public Prayer," by Ambrose D. Spong; while from the prayers of Jeremy Taylor, "Holy Living and Dying," Matthew Henry, "Method of Prayer," George Dawson, H. W. Beecher, C. H. Spurgeon, "The Pastor in Prayer," and Dr. Joseph Parker, you may gain both guidance and stimulus for your own public ministrations.

Writing to a brother minister, when he himself was laid aside from active work, Dr. R. W. Dale commends a "Manual of Intercessory Prayer," by a High Churchman; and his sturdy Protestantism

does not prevent his saying: "I have found it helpful for devotional purposes in solitary prayer, very helpful. But it may also be of use in suggesting topics for prayer in public, a matter in which I think, nay, I am sure, that I was wretchedly at fault when I was young, and am not much better now that I am old. The High Churchmen, with the use they make of the liturgical and devotional literature of many centuries, have much to teach us." In prayer, as in psalmody, the various members of the church of Christ have in all the ages come nearer to one another than they have in their Confessions of Faith or their sermons.

VI

PUBLIC PRAYER (CONTINUED)

SUMMARY

I. PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS.

1. As to posture.
2. As to voice.
3. As to language.

Guard against: (1) Florid language; (2) The language of compliment and flattery; (3) Conventional phrases; (4) Inaccurate quotations from Scripture; (5) Inelegant expressions; (6) Tiresome repetition of the same form of address; (7) Over-familiarity; (8) Tendency to preach.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC PRAYER.

1. Solemnity: (1) Do not be hurried; (2) Avoid all personalities.
2. Sympathy: (1) With the purposes and dealings of God. (2) With the congregation.
3. Devout confidence.
4. Directness.

Avoid: (1) Being too general; (2) Being too minute.

VI

PUBLIC PRAYER (CONTINUED)

I. At this point it may be well to make some suggestions as to the minister's demeanor in conducting the devotions of the congregation, and as to the language to be employed.

1. The first thing to be considered is posture. During public prayer it seems best that the minister stand. There is no question of reverence involved, for almost every attitude can appeal to historical precedent. Kneeling, which may seem the most devout posture, is open to the objections that it is tiring to the body, hurtful to the lungs, exhausting to the voice, and of all attitudes the worst for sending out articulate sound clearly. Although our congregations no longer stand, yet this was the ancient mode, and it lingered down to this century. "Daniel Webster," says his biographer, "stood up with the minister and congregation, after the manner of the Pilgrim Fathers, with great devoutness of manner." In Scotland it probably remains to this day the correct posture in prayer with many congregations.

Formerly the minister kept his eyes open, and an early writer on the subject counsels that they be fastened on the clock in the front of the gallery,

so that the prayer should not be made too long. On his first coming to London, Mr. Spurgeon prayed thus, and the letter apprising him of the vote of the meeting which called him to supply the New Park Street pulpit, with a view to a permanent settlement there, tells him that five hands were held up in the negative: "They object to you on the ground that they consider you do not use sufficient reverence in prayer."[1] In rising to pray, clasp the hands over the Bible, and by all means avoid gesticulation. The habit of lifting them with an upward sweeping gesture as a summons to the people to unite in prayer is in part a relic of priestly assumption, and in part a piece of childish dictation. Rise with deliberation, and say, simply, "Let us pray."

2. This suggests the further counsel that you pitch your voice low rather than high. At first speak slower than your usual preaching rate. Articulate very clearly. "He who cannot properly pronounce the vowels," says the Persian Shâhr,—a book of directions for the right conduct of life,—"shall not lead prayers." Let there be no violent variations in your tone. The roar is scarcely more objectionable than the whisper. Do not be rhetorical, or elocutionary, in your voice.

3. Of still greater importance is the question of the language to be used in public prayer. The judicious study of models to which reference has been made in the previous chapters, may prepare

[1] "Autobiography," Vol. I., p. 347.

you for the following suggestions. Use words which are well established in our language. Adopt the Horatian principle, and strike a happy mean between these which are fading out of use and those which have not yet obtained an accredited foothold among us. George Dawson, whose prayers are perfect in the simplicity and beauty of their form, told Dr. Dale that "he thought no word should be used in prayer that had come into the language since the time of Queen Elizabeth."[1] This is an extreme view, but it errs in the right direction. Employ very largely Scripture phraseology, for it is dear to the heart of Christian people. "Why," exclaims Edward Irving, "do not men talk of spiritual matters as much like the Scriptures as they can, and especially address God in their holy language?" Let the sentences be short rather than long, simple rather than complex. Avoid the style which the old lady who listened to his prayers, characterized as "John Forster's stand-up essays." In a word, be simple. The minister who desired to air his Latin certainly chose the wrong time in which to do it when he began his prayer, "O Lord Jesus Christ, thou art the *ne plus ultra* of our desires, the *sine qua non* of our faith, and the *Ultima Thule* of our hopes."[2] This was to violate the first canon of good style, as well as to offend against other things of still greater moment. At all events speak, as Walter Bagehot advises you to write, "like a human being."

[1] Dale, "Yale Lectures," p. 173. [2] S. H. Cox, D. D.

(1) Avoid, then, florid language. "I do not approve," said Dr. Samuel Johnson, "of figurative expressions in addressing the Supreme Being; and I never use them." The caution which is implied here is not unnecessary, and especially will the young preacher do well to heed it. With an old Scottish minister speaking to his grandson who was preparing for the same vocation, we may say, "Oh, preserve simplicity in prayer. God does not need to be told that he made the constellations." We understand with what good reason the newspapers on one occasion credited Theodore Parker with uttering "the finest prayer ever addressed to a Boston audience," when we hear him say: "We thank thee for the new life which comes tingling in the boughs of every great or little tree, which is green in the new-ascended grass, and transfigures itself in the flowers to greater brightness than Solomon ever put on. We thank thee for the seed which the farmer has cradled in the ground, or which thence lifts up its happy face of multitudinous prophecy, telling us of harvests that are to come. We thank thee also for the garment of prophecy with which thou girdest the forests and adornest every tree all around our northern lands. We bless thee for the fresh life which teems in the waters that are about us and in the little brooks which run among the hills, which warbles in the branches of the trees and hums with new-born insects throughout the peopled land." This is rhapsody; but is it prayer? And yet the dictum of Dr. Johnson seems

to be too severe when we join in a prayer of Mr. Spurgeon's in which figurative language is used with rare beauty: "Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at flood-tide; cover all my powers, drown all my sins, sweep away all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul and float it right up to my Lord's feet, and there let it lie, a poor broken shell washed up by his love, having no virtue or value, and only venturing to whisper to him that if he will put his ear to me he will hear within faint echoes of the vast waves of his own love, which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at his feet forever."

(2) Preserve yourself from using any phraseology in prayer which savors of compliment and flattery. You may be occupying the place of a brother minister. Do not indirectly congratulate him on his achievements, or his people on their activity and usefulness. We are all in the presence of God, and the time is far distant in which any minister or any church can afford to do other than be very humble and self-abasing there. Even had we done all the things that are commanded us, our fittest language would still be that which our Lord taught us to use: "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."[1]

(3) Even more than in preaching, there is a tendency in prayer to fall into the habit of using conventional phrases. Although they may not in every instance be so unmeaning as the prayer of a New

[1] Luke 17 : 10.

Jersey minister one very hot day in July, for those who, "instead of joining in the worship were sitting at their own firesides," yet, in any case, they should be repressed. "The ecclesiastical phraseology of the pulpit is to be avoided, and especially in prayer."[1] Equally, set phrases, the stock in trade of dullness, should be conspicuous only by their absence: "Each and every one," "fit and prepare us," "guide and direct us," "a realizing sense," "the act and article of death"—these are phrases out of which any meaning which they once may have possessed has faded by reason of constant use and abuse.

(4) Still more objectionable are inaccurate quotations from the Bible, such as "Where two or three are met together in thy name, there art thou in their midst, and that to bless," and "The valley and the shadow of death," and "As earthly parents give good gifts to their children," and "Run and have free course and be glorified."

(5) Inelegant expressions are to be avoided. Some of these survive in prayer although everywhere else they are counted obsolete. Such as "We commit us to thee," "We do pray." Others are illustrations of clumsy English, such as: "Grant to bless," "Do thou be present" (for "Be thou present,") and "Divine Presence," instead of "The Divine Presence." It ought not to be necessary to warn the minister against such inaccuracy as "Forgive us of our sins," and he who has not

[1] A. S. Hill, "Our English," p. 155.

learned to avoid such closing phrases as "When thou art done with us here," or even worse, "When thou art through with us here," lacks either schooling or sense.

(6) Against nothing should the minister guard his speech in prayer more jealously than the tiresome repetition of the same form. In beginning the prayer avoid the monotonous use of the words, "We thank thee," such forms as "We pray," "We beseech thee," "We ask thee," "Will the Lord be pleased," become wholly unmeaning by incessant iteration, while the word "bless" at the beginning of each petition,—"Bless the Sunday-school," "Bless the Bible classes," "Bless the sewing circle,"—is intolerable. "How many prayers," says Spurgeon, "are like the grocers' bills, 'Ditto, ditto, ditto,' or 'As per usual.'" Remember that the monotonous soon becomes the unmeaning. The objection to read prayers that they lose their power by frequent repetition, holds with still greater force against numbers of prayers that are not read. Only a vigorous effort delivers us from the bondage to the letter in prayer as in other matters. Dr. A. K. H. Boyd gives the case of an aged minister at Arbroath, in Scotland, who had used the same prayer during all his pastorate, so that a deaf woman who used to stand on the pulpit stairs had committed it to memory, and she had got into the habit of uttering it, always a few words in advance of the minister, without being conscious that she was heard by the congregation. As a still

more serious illustration of the peril with which we are dealing, he says that a minister of the Presbytery on a visit to a neighbor's house was asked to pray in the family, and while doing so he fell into the prayer of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and was not arrested till he had consecrated the elements of bread and wine.

(7) At the present time we seem to be in danger of running to an opposite extreme from the stately rhetoric of earlier days, and it is therefore necessary to warn the young preacher against overfamiliarity in prayer, and especially against what have been called "amatory phrases."[1] The constant use of the epithet "dear"—"Dear Lord," "Our dear Father," "Dear Jesus,"—and the multiplication of terms of endearment, such as, "Our dear heavenly Father," are to be avoided. Use no phrase in prayer which misrepresents the character and will of God. He is willing to answer us, he is waiting to bless. The language of urgency—"Do Lord"—is a libel on his nature and purpose.

Perhaps it may be well to add that Scripture precedent and authority are in favor of the rule that prayer should be addressed to the Father, with a recognition of the intercessory office of the Son, and of the mission of the Holy Spirit. There is good authority, both in the New Testament and in the practice of the early church, for direct address

[1] Kern, "The Ministry to the Congregation," p. 75. Fairbairn, "Pastoral Theology," p. 318.

to Christ; but in the ordinary prayers of the congregation the fuller order seems preferable.[1]

(8) The tendency to preach in prayer should also be avoided. John B. Gough recalls the words with which a minister, having opened the meeting with prayer, introduced him as the lecturer of the evening: "Ladies and gentlemen: as I have informed you in my prayer, the temperance cause is in a healthy state." Would that he had been the only sinner in this way! The disposition to give information in prayer, and so by an indirect route to reach the congregation, is so common that a word of warning is needed. Ask yourself, for instance, for whose ear such a prayer as the following is intended: "Of light, thou art the Fountain and the Center. God said, Let there be light; and there was light—himself shone upon the brooding darkness. Shine in our hearts; be the morning of our lives; be the summer of our soul. Jesus Christ, thy Son, is the Light of the world. As long as he is in the world he is the Light of the world; he abideth with us forever, therefore are we living in the day of light and in the presence of light." In the days when the principal prayer took up the better part of an hour this habit of preaching may have been excusable. But these days are past; and now the minister will do well to be on his guard against the intrusion of it with the sermon.

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[1] Porter, Homiletics," p. 287. "Life of Lyman Beecher," Vol. II., p. 112. "Life of Charles Hodge, D. D.," p. 163. "Life of Bishop Wilberforce," p. 205.

II. We may glance at some general characteristics by which Public Prayer should be distinguished.

1. Among these we must certainly mention solemnity. The exclamation of Lyman Beecher in his old age, "We have seen thee, heard thee, felt thee! God, thou art God!" should express our profound conviction as we pray. Let there be seriousness in spirit and there will also be seriousness in tone.

(1) Do not allow yourself to be hurried. Pause before beginning to pray, until there is perfect silence on the part of the congregation. In your line of thought, as of language, move with dignity and composure.

(2) It need scarcely be added that, under no provocation or excitement, should the minister allow himself to indulge in personalities in prayer. To do this is always cowardly and often profane. The patriotic passion of the hour did not condone the offense when a New England divine who lived in the days of the Revolution prayed on a public occasion: "O Lord, have mercy on the sovereigns of Europe; convert their souls; give them short lives and happy deaths; take them to heaven, and let us have no more of them." The stately Englishman who always came late to his church, and walked up the aisle during prayer, transgressed more than one of the commandments by doing so; but that did not excuse his pastor, Father Moody, of York, Maine, for breaking out: "And, O good Lord, among thy other kind dispensations, cure thy serv-

ant who has just entered thy house, of that ungodly strut." In the same way Whitefield prayed openly for a minister who himself could pray neither freely nor well, that "God would open his dumb dog's mouth." It was after Emerson had delivered an address during commencement before a New England college that a neighboring minister, being called upon to pray, freed his mind thus: "We beseech thee, O Lord, to deliver us from ever hearing any more such transcendental nonsense as we have just listened to from this sacred desk." After the benediction, Mr. Emerson asked his next neighbor the name of the officiating clergyman, and on learning who he was, remarked with characteristic suavity: "He seems a very conscientious, plain-spoken man."

The minister must have a pastoral experience of rare felicity who under the conviction that he has been maligned or misunderstood, or brought face to face with some flagrant case of meanness or bad faith on the part of one in whom he has trusted, has not needed to fight the temptation to be personal in public prayer. Under no circumstances must he yield to it. It is unpardonable, also, to suggest ludicrous ideas in prayer. A minister in London prayed probaby before a disappointing vision of the offertory: "Forgive us, O Lord, if at any time we have given pence when we should have given silver, if we have given silver when we ought to have given gold, and if we have given gold when we might have given bank-notes." This was not in

worse taste than the prayer with which a minister at one of the fashionable summer resorts is credited, when the advancing season had left his resident congregation more at leisure for religious exercises: "O Lord, now that our summer visitors have departed, wilt thou take their place in our hearts." These prayers are sufficiently condemned if we consider that they were not intended for the ear of God. A due sense of the solemnity of the exercise will set bounds about it, as about Mount Sinai, so that the unsanctified hand and heedless foot shall not touch it.

2. No prayer in the congregation can be effective which is lacking in the quality of sympathy. In some special sense the minister in public prayer stands with his hand resting on the human need and his eye lifted to the divine sufficiency. Consequently he must be in close touch alike with God and with man.

(1) Certainly his first endeavor should be to bring himself into complete accord with the purposes of God, and with his dealings with men. Edward Irving puts this well when he says: "The scope and spirit of our prayer should be limited by the promises of God. This is to make prayer a matter of serious premeditation. And, to keep it progressive with an understanding of the Scriptures, a knowledge of the purpose of God must precede it; and without that knowledge it is an empty form, or rather a sinful liberty taken with the ear of God. As if you would go to a judge and ask him to favor

your case, or to a friend and ask him to do you a wrong; or it is as if, having received intelligence from a distant correspondent, you should presume to write back to him upon the subject without being at the pains to peruse what he had said. It is most lamentable to hear very often how this necessary rule of prayer is broken through, and with what rude, unprepared language the ear of God is vexed."

(2) Scarcely less important is it that the minister be in very close sympathy with men. Let him be, as was his Lord, touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He himself must have suffered, being tempted. As with the high priest so should it be with him; he must be "taken from among men." Previous preparation will have helped him to gather up the varied circumstances and conditions of the congregation. He will have in mind, as he prays, the conflicts, the victories and the defeats, the hopes and joys, the fears and sorrows of those who are worshiping with him. He may not have at command such language as clothed the prayer of Robert Louis Stevenson on the evening before his death, but the tender human spirit of it he may well emulate in the larger household to which he ministers: "We beseech thee, Lord, to behold us with favor, folk of many families and nations gathered together in the peace of this roof, weak men and women existing under the covert of thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a little longer—with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavors

against evil; suffer us awhile longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labor—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day is marked for sorrow, strong to endure it. Amen."

3. This suggests a third characteristic of public prayer, namely, devout confidence. Let there be much thanksgiving and praise. Be courageous. Be truthful. Be expectant. Quicken the heart of every true worshiper with the spirit of hope. "To him," says a friend of Dr. Constans L. Goodall, "prayer was no mere intellectual rhapsody or emotional ecstasy; it was the mighty power that moved the arm of Omnipotence; the outpouring of a soul that touched the heart of Omniscience; the outgoing of a faith that was boundless as Omnipresence, for it had its origin and root in God himself." Such prayer as this is strong in the confidence which is expressed by the old English divine: "Good prayers never come weeping home. I am sure I shall receive either what I ask or what I should ask." No nerveless fingers can discharge the "strong bolts shot up to heaven" by which Luther and Knox and Whitefield prevailed in prayer. "A man that

could pray like that," exclaimed one minister to another after hearing Spurgeon, "could influence the world."

4. To the characteristics of solemnity, sympathy, and holy confidence, we must add one more—directness. Come at once to the mercy-seat. A few words of invocation at the beginning of the service will often do this. The old soldier charged at the battle of Edgehill with the prayer of which Hume said that no doubt there were many longer but hardly one so good offered that day: "O Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget thee, do not thou forget me." We recall this, because it illustrates the grace of directness which we are commending. To come to practical counsels, we advise that in his language, while not too familiar, the minister be specific and plain. Do not pray: "Bless that invaluable institution which has for its object the bringing up of the young in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." No; say rather, "Bless the Sunday-school." The late George Gilfillan, of Dundee, dared to use the word "potato" freely in his congregational prayers during the blight of 1848. He refused to indulge in allusive references or circumlocution. And so at last he was able to say: "We thank thee, O Lord, that there is no potato blight this year!"

(1) Cultivate minuteness without triviality. Avoid extremes. Do not be too general. The subjective prayer which resolves itself into a rhapsody or a reverie has no precedent in Scripture. Channing

"never prayed for anything outward."[1] But Paul writes to the Philippians: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."[2]

(2) On the other hand, beware of trivial minuteness. A minister returning to his weekly prayer meeting after having had a new set of teeth put in, was more amused than gratified when one good brother prayed: "Lord, we thank thee that thou hast brought back our dear pastor, and now that thou hast given him his new artificial members, bless them to the proclamation of thy truth."[3] This was perhaps pardonable in a simple peasant, but the minister in Glasgow should have restrained his tendency to detail when he offered up a prayer for "the safety of those taking part in the exhilarating but lawful enjoyment upon the ice." The minuteness of the Episcopal Prayer-book is not offensive when it pleads with much particularity for "thy servant for whose preservation on the great deep our prayers are desired." A prayer in Edward the Sixth's prayer-book does not hesitate to deal with great social wrongs: "We heartily pray thee to send thy Holy Spirit into the hearts of them that possess the pastures and ground of the earth, that they remembering themselves to be thy tenants may not rack or stretch out the rents of their houses or lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines or moneys after the manner of covetous groundlings;

[1] Peabody's "Reminiscences of Channing," p. 14.
[2] Phil. 4 : 6. [3] W. Williams, "Reminiscences of C. H. Spurgeon," p. 33.

but so let them out that the inhabitants thereof may be able to pay the rents and to live and nourish their families, and remember the poor." There must have been a fearlessness of particularity in the prayers of Father Wilson, of the First Church of Boston, when his hearers once begged him to stop praying for rain, because since he began to do so some of the neighboring towns had been flooded. And to come to later instances, one recalls as excellent in spirit and language the prayer in which Henry Ward Beecher pleaded for the life of President Grant when he was on his deathbed; and the prayer with which Dr. Maclaren besought for the queen of England, under the shadow of a great domestic loss, that cheer and calm might be granted, and that "the thrill of passion and sympathy which has moved this great nation may not pass unimproved, but that it may help to lead many more wisely to consider how vain is the show of earth, how solid the realities of heaven." Nor would the member of his congregation in a great mill-town of England fail to be touched as Dr. Fairbairn prayed: "Many of us live by the sweat of the brow; some of us by the sweat of the brain; and many by the sweat of the heart. That, O Lord, thou knowest is the hardest sweat of all."

VII

PUBLIC PRAYER (Concluded)

SUMMARY

I. THE INVOCATION.
   1. The Lord's Prayer.
   2. Words taken from Scripture and inviting to worship.
   3. Verses of Scripture followed by the Lord's Prayer or by a prayer of invocation.
   4. A Prayer of Invocation.

II. THE PRINCIPAL PRAYER.
   1. As to its length.
   2. Parts of the Principal Prayer: (1) Adoration and thanksgiving; (2) Confession and intercession; (3) Petition.

   Counsels:
      1. Aim to make the prayer inclusive.
      2. Remember objects likely to be overlooked.
      3. Vary the prayer.
      4. Yet do not fear to repeat.
      5. Train the congregation to conclude with the "amen."

III. THE PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.
   1. Must have a special bearing on the sermon.
   2. Should touch on the whole service, and commend the congregation, in dispersing, to God.
   3. This prayer may sometimes be omitted.

IV. THE BENEDICTION.
   1. Study variety of form.
   2. Be very solemn and deliberate.
   3. By attitude and phraseology show that you are one of the congregation.
   4. Keep the people in the attitude of devotion for a few moments after the conclusion of the prayer.

VII

PUBLIC PRAYER (CONCLUDED)

I. ALTHOUGH by no means universal, yet it is a very general practice to begin the public service with some form of Invocation, and we may, therefore, consider this first.

1. The simplest method of commencing the service is by repeating the Lord's Prayer with the congregation. Unless this is done heartily, however, it had better not be done at all. The people will need to be trained, and even then it will be needful now and again to remind them of their duty.

2. Much can be said in favor of opening the service with passages of Scripture inviting to worship,[1] the congregation standing meanwhile. The gloria, sung by all the congregation, may very well follow.

3. Sometimes these verses are succeeded by a prayer of invocation, or by the congregational use of the Lord's Prayer. The order may be further varied if the service begins with the doxology, to which succeeds a prayer of invocation, closing with the general repetition of the Lord's Prayer.

4. Perhaps to the majority of ministers the invocation is the most difficult, as to the people it is the

[1] Such as Num. 6 : 24-26; Eph. 1 : 3, 4; Phil. 2 : 9-11; Heb. 13 : 20, 21; 2 Peter 1 : 2, 3; Rev. 1 : 5, 6.

least profitable of all the prayers in the public service. The congregation has not fully assembled. In a chilly atmosphere the voice may seem thin and unsympathetic. There has as yet been no conscious interchange of feeling between the minister and the people. For these reasons a hymn, or some other such form as we have suggested, may be preferred. A common act of worship in which all the congregation joins strikes the keynote for the service more happily than does the prayer, unless it be singularly fortunate. No one who once heard it will forget the prayer with which Mr. Spurgeon opened his morning service. Brief though it was, we can understand why a minister from America should declare that to hear that and nothing else was alone worth crossing the Atlantic. The invocation should be true to its name. Call down the blessing of God upon those who are present, and upon all worshiping congregations everywhere, and do not fail to remember those who in the suffering of the sick chamber or the loneliness of the house of mourning have their windows also open toward Jerusalem. Be concise, fervid, and sympathetic, and use largely the words and thoughts of Scripture.

II. We pass on to consider the Principal Prayer. In some cases this prayer has with advantage been divided into two parts, with a hymn or chant between. This has been intended to obviate the objection that the prayer is apt to be long, and yet to give an opportunity for embracing in it the va-

rious matters which needed to be mentioned. It might be well to consider whether this arrangement has not very much to be said in its favor; but our present duty is with the prayer as a whole.

1. And first, let us deal with its length. It is significant that for two centuries it has been generally known as "the long prayer." With the Puritans this was no figure of speech. The prayer was really long. "The warning legend, 'Be short,' which Cotton Mather inscribed over his study door, was not written over his pulpit; for he wrote in his diary that at his own ordination he 'prayed for an hour and a quarter.'"[1] That the people loved to have it so we may infer from the fact that when the Rev. Samuel Terrey, of Weymouth, Massachusetts, prayed two hours without stopping, upon a public fast day in 1696, it is recorded that his "audience wished that the prayer had been longer." Professor Phelps, in language which has a suspicion of humor in it, records of Father Wilson, of the First Church of Boston, that he "often prayed two hours at a stretch." Within a few years a prayer of forty-five minutes was delivered by the assistant pastor in a Scottish parish, and then only concluded because "his superior pulled his coat-tails to draw his attention to the fact that the congregation were leaving the church." Perhaps we ourselves may be able to agree with Dr. N. I. Burton when he says: "The moment I closed my eyes, time was cheap. In the bliss of amplification I took not

[1] Earl, "The Sabbath in Puritan New England," pp. 79, 81.

note of time; and what is so blissful as amplification?"[1] Certainly we shall do well to lay to heart his wise counsel in reference to this prayer: "While you keep on calling it long, take care that it never is long." But we must refuse to regulate the length of this prayer entirely by the watch. Dr. C. L. Goodell, who excelled in congregational prayer, rarely exceeded seven minutes, and was often not more than five. Mr. Spurgeon often prayed fifteen minutes, and then, says one of his hearers, "you would by no means wish him to stop, or think that he had yet prayed long enough."[2] "Everything depends upon the spirit, the range, the appropriateness, and the purpose of the prayer." The noble words of Dr. Dale are a sufficient vindication of this view: "In our public prayer we must think less than we have been accustomed to think of the taste, the criticism, the impatience of the men who do not pray. In the presence of the awful perils from which we ask to be redeemed, of the infinite blessings we desire to obtain, and of the bright perfections we adore, we must not be troubled by the indifference and the weariness of those to whom these transcendent terrors and glories are all unreal. When we pray, our great design is not to move men, but to move God; and if we fail to do that, we fail altogether. We must appeal to the Holy Ghost."[3]

[1] Burton, "Yale Lectures," p. 191.

[2] Dr. Joseph Parker, "*Ad Clerum*," Chap. IX.

[3] R. W. Dale, "The Holy Spirit in relation to the Ministry, Worship, and Work of the Church," p. 37.

In passing, it may be well to caution you against long preambles, diffuseness, and repetition in your prayer. Confine yourself to such subjects as are relevant. Have always in mind the congregation on whose behalf you are praying. Tennyson's words, true of all prayer, are especially true here: "Prayer is, to take a mundane simile, like opening a sluice between the great ocean and our little channels when the great sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide."[1] He who opens the sluice needs to do so with promptness and decision. Give no occasion to your congregation to say with Dr. C. H. Parkhurst, "The world would have been badly off if the Almighty had not known better how to answer prayers than do men to make them."

2. We come now to parts of the principal prayer. These are three: First, adoration and thanksgiving; second, confession and intercession; third, petition. These parts may be recalled by the acrostic: A, Ascription and Adoration; C, Confession; T, Thanksgiving; S, Supplication; the letters combined forming the word A C T S. A friend of Mr. Spurgeon's quotes him as saying, in conversation: "In a single verse old Dr. Watts has admirably taught the art of prayer. I will give it to you:

> Call upon God, adore, confess,
> Petition, plead, and then declare
> You are the Lord's. Give thanks and bless.
> And let Amen conclude the prayer."

[1] "Tennyson's Life," Vol. I., p. 324.

(1) While it seems natural to begin this prayer with words of adoration and thankfulness, yet this need not be done at any great length, because the gratitude and joy of the people can be expressed even better in the hymns, and especially in that with which the worship is begun. The fashion for opening the prayer with elaborate ascriptions of praise to God, (often in the language of the schools rather than in that of Scripture), has passed away. Yet within bounds the use of the various names and attributes of God as incentives to adoration is surely to be commended. Schoolman though he was, there was much of the saint in Thomas Aquinas when he prayed before resuming his studies: "Ineffably wise and good Creator, illustrious Original, true fountain of Light and Wisdom, vouchsafe to infuse into my understanding some ray of thy brightness. Thou that makest the tongues of infants eloquent, instruct, I pray thee, my tongue likewise; and pour upon my lips the grace of thy benediction."

(2) It has been charged upon the non-liturgical churches that they do not as a rule confess their sins. The Episcopal Prayer-book, following the traditional order, places confession first, and recurs to it more than once as the service proceeds. Probably there is reason for the criticism that too little space is given to confession in the ordinary extemporaneous prayer. Confession is central in the Lord's Prayer, and whatever place it occupies in your petition, certainly that place should be dis-

tinct and prominent. At the same time, distinguish between the things which are seemly in a general prayer and those which should be confined to prayer offered in private or in the weekly meeting for prayer. Do not let the confession of sins hinder the confession of sin. It is possible to be too specific, when you are acknowledging the transgressions of an entire congregation.

(3) Passing to petition, we would suggest that you make this a very prominent feature of your prayer. "Prayer is," as the Westminster divines put it, "the offering up of our desires to God." "Our wants," said Rutherford, "best qualify us for Christ." The Lord's Prayer is chiefly petition, and petition is also the staple in our Lord's directions for prayer: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[1] The prayers of the New Testament have the same character.

Because in this part of the prayer so much has to be remembered, it is well to pursue some order; such as, personal petitions (experimental in their character), petitions bearing on our relations to others; church interests; missions; national matters (our rulers, magistrates, and lawgivers); the people at large; the nations of the world; the future of the race. The order may be reversed, so that from the outermost circle you can move inward to the individual life. We give the following Counsels:

[1] Matt. 7 : 7; Acts 1 : 24, 25; 4 : 24-30; 7 : 59, 60; Eph. 1 : 17-19; 3 : 14-21; Phil. 1 : 9-11; 1 Thess. 3 : 10-13.

1. Only, in any case, aim to offer up such a prayer as either by statement or suggestion shall in clear and reverent language embrace the wants and circumstances of all.

2. Now and then remember in this prayer the objects which are likely to be overlooked; such as prisoners in jails, and those who are in reformatories; those bereft of their reason, inmates of almshouses, patients in hospitals, Christian associations, colleges, and schools of sacred learning; and often make mention of the public schools and of the teachers who are engaged in them.

3. Further, we counsel you to vary your prayer. You are under no obligation to pray the world over at every service. A sentence may be sufficiently comprehensive to embrace many wants and touch on many experiences. To say, "We thank thee for the sweet souls which have made it easy for us to believe in God and Christ and immortality," is to suggest the whole household of faith. To say, "Deep calleth unto deep,—the depth of our ignorance to the depth of thy knowledge; the depth of our need to the depth of thy fullness; the depth of our weakness to the depth of thy strength," is at once to set the entire congregation on the threshold of God's treasure house. It is wise to study for freshness the prayers of others. After a lapse of twenty years a minister recalls the prayer with which Mr. Spurgeon began a morning service, and often it must have incited him to a new note also: "Our Gracious God, we, thy children, bless thee

for this thy day; placed not now at the end of a week of toil, but at the very beginning of it, for we have not to labor to obtain the day of rest, but thou dost give us to rest first, and then bid us go to work in the strength received."[1]

4. And yet, while studying freshness and variety in the forms of your prayer, be not unduly afraid of repetition. Because human nature is always the same, therefore substantially the same things need to be often prayed for. The author of "Rab and his Friends," tells us that his father, Dr. John Brown, invariably used the same prayer in church on Sunday mornings, giving as his excuse for doing so, that he could not improve upon it. There may be a change of tune, but the same peal of bells will have to be rung, week after week; it was across the very harp which had made music during many a melodious hour in the past that the psalmist ran his fingers when he cried, "O sing unto the Lord a new song!"

5. To these counsels we add one more. Train the whole congregation, if possible, to join with you in the "Amen" when the prayer is ended. The rabbis were wont to say that by so doing the people set their names to an epistle written by the hand of another. Thus they adopted it as their own. For this reason the leader was instructed to pronounce the "Amen" with a grave and distinct voice, avoiding any appearance of haste; and in their turn the people were bidden to utter it in a

[1] Williams, "Reminiscences of Spurgeon," p. 269.

tone subdued and solemn ; and to use it not formally but as the expression of their belief that God would indeed hear and bless them.

III. Not much needs to be said as to the Prayer After the Sermon. It should be very brief. Naturally it will have a special bearing upon the sermon which has just been preached. To this this prayer furnishes, as it were, a heavenward setting. It carries the discourse, the preacher, and the people up to the throne of grace, as the high priest bore Israel on his heart when he passed within the veil and stood before the Mercy Seat. A wider note may be struck by it if you touch in few words upon the entire service, and commit to the love of God the congregation now about to disperse. There is no reason why the prayer should not occasionally be omitted. Especially when the sermon has been of a searching character, when it has appealed to the individual conscience, when it has set the alternatives of life and death before the people, let that be the last word. Under these circumstances much might be gained if the congregation would quickly disperse, and "depart every one to his house."

IV. As to the Benediction, the following points should be noted :

1. Study to acquire variety of form. The benedictions of Scripture are numerous, although the majority of ministers may use only one or two. From the Old Testament take the one benediction which comes direct from God : "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and

unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."[1]

A selection from the benedictions of the Bible may very well be prepared, and printed on a card, and pasted into the hymn-book, or kept near at hand for pulpit use.[2]

2. In the use of the formula, just because it is a formula, be solemn, impressive and deliberate. Haste is never more irreverent in public worship than it is here. And nowhere is it so fatally easy to fall into formalism. The way of escape from this is through the sensibilities. The benedictions are all of them rich in devout feeling. It was Dean Stanley's custom "to give a three-fold benediction: The Lord bless you and keep you, etc., The Peace of God, etc., and The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.[3] His wife, Lady Augusta Stanley, greatly admired this triple blessing, and begged him always to think specially of herself when pronouncing it. "None who were present at her funeral can forget the tremulous yet decided voice, the suppressed emotion, the triumph of love, as standing at the end of the nave, the Dean closed the service, and with quivering accents made this

[1] Num. 6 : 22-26.

[2] Such as: Rom. 16 : 27; 1 Cor. 16 : 23; 2 Cor. 13 : 14; Gal. 1 : 3-5; Phil. 4 : 23; 1 Tim. 1 : 17; Heb. 13 : 25; Jude 24, 25; Rev. 1 : 5, 6.

[3] Num. 6 : 24-26; Phil. 4 : 7; 2 Cor. 13 : 14.

benediction of prophets and apostles heard throughout the Abbey."[1]

3. By posture and phraseology avoid giving the impression that you are a priest occupying an official position and exercising a sacerdotal function. "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."[2] The hands should not be lifted and spread out in the posture of blessing the people. The form employed should not even use the apostolic "with you," but rather the congregational "with us."

4. For a few moments after the benediction has been uttered, keep the congregation in the attitude of devotion. This may be done by pausing after the last word of the benediction, and before saying amen. It may also be done by having the choir chant the "Amen" in low tones, the people, meanwhile, remaining with bowed heads. Probably the best arrangement of the concluding part of the service is to have the hymn immediately follow the sermon, and the prayer which succeeds it close with the benediction, the people remaining either kneeling or seated. In any case, "when the benediction is pronounced let there be a moment of silent, prayerful response in the congregation. Then let them quietly disperse."[3]

[1] Dr. Newman Hall, "Reminiscences." [2] 1 Tim. 2 : 5.
[3] Kern, "The Ministry in the Congregation," p. 77.

VIII

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES

SUMMARY

I. THE VALUE OF THE PUBLIC READING OF THE BIBLE.
This may be learned:
1. From Scripture: (1) Ezra; (2) Jesus.
2. From later history: (1) The early church laid much stress upon it; (2) Has been a powerful agency in great religious awakenings; (3) Permanent impressions often made by it.

NOTE. As to the reading of the Bible without note or comment.

II. DIRECTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC READING OF THE BIBLE.
1. Carefully prepare beforehand: (1) Read Authorized and Revised versions; (2) Read in private for your own personal profit; (3) Read alone when alone with a view to reading in public; (4) Read with a view to mastering the precise thought of the original.
2. Have sufficient reading of the Scripture in the public service.
3. Do full justice to the whole Bible.
4. Select the passages to be read with a view to the whole service.
5. Take this part of the service yourself.
6. While reading concentrate your thoughts upon the work which you are doing.
7. Announce the passage to be read intelligently and distinctly.
8. Use, if you think well, some brief form in introducing and concluding the reading.
9. Occasionally it may be well to expound the Scripture which is read.

VIII

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES

THE subject with which we now have to deal is The Reading of the Scriptures, a part of public worship in which, for lack of thought or training, golden opportunities are lost by the majority of ministers.

I. In order to do justice to this subject we may begin by considering the value of the Public Reading of the Bible.

1. The first illustration of this comes, as we might expect, from Scripture itself.

(1) The model for us to copy is found in Ezra, when from his pulpit of wood, one September morning during the feast of Tabernacles, he unrolled before the eyes of the expectant multitude the scroll of the law, and not only read from morning until evening, but read so well that his hearers remained standing for six hours "attentive unto the book of the law."[1] But already the reading of the sacred books was a familiar exercise with the Hebrews. In the audience of all the people, Moses had read the books of the covenant.[2] Entering into the land of Canaan, as leader of Israel, Joshua read to them all the words of the law, "the blessings and cursings, according to all that is writ-

[1] Neh. 8 : 1-9. [2] Deut. 29.

ten in the law."[1] The book of the law which was recovered when the temple was repaired in the reign of Josiah, he himself read in the ears of "all the people great and small."[2] And stronger than any of these must have been the influence of the parental example in cases where the father was faithful to the divine injunction: "These words which I command thee . . . thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."[3]

(2) The service in the synagogue was largely composed of the reading of the Scriptures. To it Jesus gave a new lustre when one day, during worship in the city where he had been brought up, he took the book from the minister, and opening it read the great prophetic words which only at that moment received their fulfillment. No wonder that "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him."[4]

2. Another illustration comes from later history.

(1) The early church evidently laid great emphasis upon this part of the service. In the very ancient church of St. Clement at Rome are still to be seen the two marble ambons, or pulpits, from which the Scriptures were read. "A place of honor was made for them in order to mark well the importance which was given to the book of God in public worship. The ambon of the Gospel was

[1] Josh. 8 : 34. [2] 2 Chron. 34 : 30. [3] Deut. 6 : 6, 7. [4] Luke 4 : 20.

higher than that of the Epistles, as if to witness that the source of all religious authority was indeed he who is greater than all the apostles—Jesus Christ the Son of God. These two pulpits of the basilica of St. Clement remain as monuments of the great epoch of primitive Christianity, witnesses against the worship in which the Holy Book, instead of being read in a manner that can be understood, becomes a monotonous mimical chant in a language which is dead, and which carries only its sounds to the ear, without giving a single thought to the mind or heart."[1]

(2) It would be easy to prove from history that the reading of the Scriptures has once and again been a powerful agency in great religious awakenings. It was so when Savonarola read from his little Bible before the thousands crowding about him in the Duomo at Florence; and when Wycliffe's "Poor Preachers" carried the word through the villages of England; and when Luther's Bible roused the conscience of Germany; and when "doctors and abbots, men of all ranks and titles flocked with the students"[2] into Colet's lecture hall in Oxford, to hear him read and expound the Epistles; and when crowds gathered about the chained Bibles in St. Paul's Cathedral and persisted in reading them aloud, even during the public services.

(3) But there is no need to appeal to the past. The same book lies open in the hand of the minis-

[1] Pressensé. [2] Seebohm, "The Oxford Reformers," p. 11.

ter to-day, and the records of the pulpit witness that permanent good has repeatedly been effected by the serious and intelligent reading of the Bible in public worship. In this exercise William Jay, of Bath, "never forgot that he was enunciating the words of the Most High"; his contemporary, Dr. McAll, of Manchester, testified that it had come to his knowledge that "some of the most powerful impressions which had been made on the hearts of his hearers had been wrought by the simple reading of the word of God," and he added, "If the Lord had appointed two officers in his church, the one to preach the Gospel and the other to read the Scriptures, and had given me the choice of these, I should have chosen to be a reader of the inspired word of Jehovah." The reading of the Bible in church, by Bishop Jacobson of Chester was, says of one of his hearers, "in itself a commentary, the commentary of a deep theologian." In the same way, by emphasizing the proper word Dr. Maclaren "often throws a flood of interpretative and homiletic light upon the passage in which it occurs." His reading of Nathan's words to David, "Thou art the man," not loud and denunciatory, but like oil upon the fire of the king's indignation, slow, distinct, intense, made for at least one worshiper in his congregation "an epoch in his spiritual life." Who shall say how far back these influences which determine the reader's tone and emphasis have their source? He was an old man, and had for many years been known as himself an

admirable reader of the Bible in public worship, when, with tears rolling down his cheeks, Henry Ward Beecher read to his family the matchless, immortal story of Joseph, as he first heard it from his Aunt Esther, when he was only a young boy, and her wonderful readings from the Bible in his father's parsonage made many an hour radiant and cheerful.[1] At the opposite extreme to the Puritan manse is the English rectory; but there a visitor recalls Sydney Smith taking down the Bible from the book-case that he might illustrate the beauty of its style from the Psalms, and a worshiper in his church remembers his powerful countenance and melodious voice as his reading of the lessons for the day became "a commentary on every word, bringing out the rich, deep meaning of the sacred page."[2]

NOTE. That this important part of the public worship of God has received less attention than it deserves is in a measure accounted for when we remember that the reading of the Bible without note or comment was practically prohibited by the early settlers in New England and by their descendants. "It cannot be proved," says Increase Mather, "that Dumb Reading, or public Reading of the Scriptures without any Explication or Exhortation, is part of the Pastoral Office."[3] The teacher in the meeting-house in these primitive times read a

[1] Barrow's "Beecher," p. 22.
[2] Sydney Smith, "Memoirs," pp. 218, 253.
[3] Dr. Williston Walker, "The Congregational Idea in Worship," p. 15.

passage of the Bible, expounding it section by section. "This form of Scripture reading was deemed the only fitting method by the New England fathers, reading without comment being supposed to savor of the liturgical usages from which they had fled."[1]

II. We proceed to give some Directions for the Public Reading of the Bible.

1. It should go without saying that there ought to be careful preparation in private for this public exercise.

(1) By all means read both the Authorized and the Revised versions, and compare the two. There are places in which the later version should be used. A pulpit Bible with the two in parallel columns will be of service; and in your preparatory study of the passage to be read you can determine where to substitute the one version for the other. For the present, however, it seems wiser, as a general rule, to keep to the older version. It has still the ear and heart of the people. It rarely differs so materially from the Revised version as to necessitate much correction. It will always remain incomparable in its noble diction; and by virtue of its musical and sonorous English it is better adapted for public reading than any other book in our literature. Moreover, every year that passes bears witness that the Revised version is neither the final nor the generally accepted rendering.

(2) In private, and with due deliberation, read the selected passages for your own private profit.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

This, which was one secret of the impressive reading of Frederick Denison Maurice and of John Henry Newman, will save the public exercise from formality and lifelessness. The passage will become to you, when you read it before the people, what Melanchthon said Luther's words were, "born not on his lips but in his soul."

(3) Read aloud when alone with a view to intelligent and impressive reading in public. Avoid being either too conversational or too dramatic. Everywhere objectionable, the mere elocutionist is especially so here. Although it lacked in variety and perhaps merited the frank criticism of a trans-Atlantic visitor that it was "not of a kind which would pass muster on our American platform," "the reading of Tennyson was considered by good judges as almost perfect, because it had the supreme merit of entire distinctness, of true emphasis, of fine intonation, and of perfect naturalness."[1] To a mouthing clergyman, John Kemble said: "Allow me, sir, to advise you when you read the Scriptures, or any other book, to think more of what you read than how you read it." And Archbishop Whately, with characteristic bluntness, told a clerical friend who insisted on eliciting from him his opinion as to his rendering of the church service, that there were only two parts where he read well, and those the words "Here endeth the First Lesson," and "Here endeth the Second Lesson." "I mean," added he, "that these parts you read in

[1] F. W. Farrar.

your own natural voice and manner, which are very good; the rest is all artificial and assumed."

Much may be learned from the pains which the actor and the public reader take with their parts. Sarah Siddons invariably read over the play on the morning of her performance, and never failed to discover some fine point which had hitherto escaped her; and Charles Dickens, when giving a reading from one of his own novels, used to repeat it to himself often twice a day, and with just as much care as when he stood before his audience at night. "He felt that nothing could be done well, that no great perfection could be reached, without taking pains."

(4) Read in private with a view to mastering the precise thought in the original. Find the antithesis, not only in the words and sentences, but also in the thought. The late Dr. Deems, of New York, once wrote: "A man who can read properly the first chapter of John's Gospel, can read properly anything in the Bible. The first verse is crucial. I confess to have spent a quarter of a century in striving to read it, but I am not now so confident of my reading as to insist upon it." Pay special attention to emphasis. Emphasis is exposition. When Ezra read in the book of the law "distinctly," whether he interpreted its meaning or not, he made the people understand by clear utterance and intelligent emphasis. Of Bishop McIlvaine, of Ohio, one of his hearers, recalling after many years how when a lad he listened to him, says: "His reading

was interpretation in the highest degree. Inflection, emphasis, and chastened tone, rightly divided the word of truth, illumined obscure passages, and brought to light the hidden riches of secret places." All this does not come by a sudden flash of intelligence during the public reading. It may be well to mark passages in your study Bible with the appropriate emphasis.

2. Arrange the order of service so as to have sufficient reading of the Scriptures. The people are perishing for lack of the Bible. The book of which a secular journal can write, "Its variety of style, its marvelous felicity of phrase, and its dignity and impressiveness early entered into the very fibre of our literary expression,"[1] is the book which we are not only permitted but bound to read in public. At a time when "the systematic reading of it in the family has much declined, and has already largely disappeared from the schoolroom," it is all the more incumbent upon us to make the ear familiar with the treasures of this greatest landmark of the English tongue. Apart entirely from its literary excellence, and of course of far greater moment, is the fact that the Scriptures are the word of God. Herein lies the superior authority of the Bible over the sermon. If any part of the service has to be curtailed, do not let this part suffer. There should certainly be two readings from the Bible in the morning service, besides the responsive reading of the Psalms.

[1] "The Nation," Nov. 16, 1899, p. 369.

3. Do full justice also to the whole Bible. Keep a list of the passages which you read. See that you deal fairly by less known parts. The occasional use of the Lectionary of the Episcopal Church may be recommended. A minister returning from his vacation, after worshiping in various churches, found himself wondering whether the Old Testament consisted wholly of the Psalms and the prophecies of Isaiah. The pulpit Bible of a very doctrinal preacher of a past generation, after being in use twenty-seven years told its tale of use and abuse. "The first part remained as clean as on the day it left the press; the Psalms and Isaiah had certainly been turned over many times; the Gospels must have been often read; but the Epistle to the Romans was fairly worn through constant reference, and the eighth chapter was in holes."[1] This was for that minister to have left undone the things that he should have done. The whole counsel of God had not been declared.

4. The passages to be read should be selected with a view to the entire service.

There is no need to read the chapter from which the text is to be taken, unless it will be needed in the expository part of the discourse; or unless it be a chapter with which the congregation is not sufficiently familiar. On the contrary, it is often better to select two independent passages, one from the Old Testament and one from the New, illustrating the subject of the discourse, but not necessarily

[1] Dr. John Howard Hinton, London.

containing the text. This will impress upon the people alike the scope and the unity of Scripture. Occasionally it is profitable to make a selection of from ten to twenty passages in the Bible throwing light upon the theme of your sermon. Of a London preacher, an occasional worshiper notes: "The reading of Scripture consisted of a selection of Paul's prayers from the Epistles. 'Paul,' said he, 'is always good, but Paul on his knees is at his best. This is a little constellation of prayers; if you study them well you will know what to pray for.'"

5. Take this part of the service yourself. You are under no obligation to invite into the pulpit any minister who happens to be present. If he is wise he will prefer to be allowed to remain in the pew; if he is not wise that is the best place for him. And certainly this reading of the Scriptures, for which we are presuming that you have made careful preparation, should not be thrust without previous warning into strange hands. Nor do we recommend the responsive reading of the Bible. Even the Psalms ought to be sung and not read. But referring now to other books of Scripture, we would urge that no good end is gained by their being read responsively. The sense is broken, and often lost, and attention is distracted from the word to the readers.

6. While reading, concentrate your thought upon the work in which you are engaged. Mr. Beecher once found that he had unconsciously read nearly a whole chapter of the Bible in the course of his

service, while at the same time he had been led off into an intense study of the sermon that was to come soon after it.[1] In avoiding this, your devout preparation in private for this part of public worship will be very helpful. And as you read remember that it is God's word to which the people are listening. For this reason it is held by some that the eyes of the minister should never be lifted from the page which he is reading. Not even by the slightest glance or gesture must he divert attention from the message to the messenger.

7. Never fail to announce the passage which you are about to read. The announcement after the reading is unmeaning. Your object should be to induce the people to have Bibles and use them. Announce in the right order, first the book, then the chapter, and then, where necessary, the verses which are to be read. Announce in good English, and with the true emphasis. It is not correct to say "First Corinthians." Time is not so precious that you are forced to be ungrammatical. Rather say, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians." Announce the reading as you would any other matter of interest. Look up; speak up; pause after announcing, and before you begin to read. Do not commence until there is perfect quiet. Let no one be shown to a seat while God is speaking through his word.

8. Use, if you think well, some short form when you introduce and when you conclude the reading.

[1] Abbott's "Beecher," p. 209.

In introducing it a brief invitation is seemly : " The morning lesson will be found," or " Let us read from God's word " ; concluding, the words " The Lord bless to us the reading of his word " form a suitable prayer. By all means be reverent in the way in which you open and close the book. Of Summerfield, the young minister whose early death took from the pulpit one of its most promising preachers, it is said that " his manner of laying hand upon the Bible increased the observer's reverence for the inspired volume."

9. Occasionally it may be well to expound the portion of Scripture which you read. As we have seen, many of the early churches of New England would not tolerate the reading of the Bible in their pulpits without such comment. " That state of feeling," says Professor Phelps, " led to a vast amount of exposition of the Bible outside of sermons." Much can be said for and against the practice. In favor of it, we should urge that when words have become at all obscure, or when any statement needs a few sentences to make the meaning clear, the practice is to be commended. Should you be the one in a thousand who is able to put in short and pithy sentences the gist of a whole passage, if, unlike the majority of preachers, your mind and your style be more favorable to compression than to expansion, then by all means expound. Your gift may lie there. Spurgeon's exposition was often superior to his sermon ; and he himself said that as a rule he spent more time over it. But

how rare is the art! It will scarcely be questioned that as a rule expositions fail to expound. "It is far better," said Luther, "to see with our own eyes than with the eyes of other people." A frank if confused preacher in a Western State, after reading a verse over which there had been much controversy, startled his congregation by observing: "Brethren, I won't comment on this passage; I am afraid I might make it worse than it is." All nervousness apart, it must be owned that few ministers make the passage any better. Oftener than not they darken counsel by words, and confuse what would otherwise be clear. Certainly the expositor breaks the continuity of the sense. What other writers would survive such treatment? How irritating it would be were Shakespeare or Bacon or Hooker or Ruskin bidden stand aside while in the full flow of their great sentences, that their words might be inflated by irrelevant amplifications. There are expounders of the Bible in the pulpit who somehow recall what Martin Luther says in another connection: "I am a great enemy to flies. When I have a good book they flock upon it, and parade up and down upon it, and soil it." It was the prince of pulpit expounders himself who closed his running comment one morning with the confession: "I feel the feebleness of my exposition, but I also feel the strength of the love of God. Well, that is right, for we do not wish to taste the cup when we drink the waters of eternal life."[1]

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.

IX

MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

SUMMARY

I. PRELIMINARY COUNSELS.

1. Let the minister himself appreciate the importance of the subject.
   (1) The instinct to express devout emotion in song is very general.
   (2) The power of song has been constantly felt in great religious movements.
   (3) The benefit of musical culture to a congregation is very great.
   (4) The service as a whole is much affected by the way in which this part of it is rendered.
2. Let the minister take a personal interest in the music of his church.
   Why has church music been neglected, despised, or even condemned?
   (1) From prejudice: *a*. Ecclesiastical; *b*. Doctrinal.
   (2) From ignorance or indifference.
   NOTE. The minister and the choir.
3. Let the minister educate himself in this subject.
   (1) Study lyrical poetry.
   Why so few great poets have written hymns.
   (2) Learn something of the various kinds of music.
   (3) Study the literature of hymns.
   (4) Examine and compare hymn-books.
   (5) Make a list of the best hymns.
   (6) If possible cultivate a taste for singing.
4. Let the minister endeavor to interest his congregation in music.
   (1) The singing school may be helpful.
   (2) Occasionally lecture on the subject.
   (3) Make it prominent in the public service.

IX

MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

WE now proceed to consider the musical part of the public service. The time has passed in which by this was meant only the singing of hymns. To-day, giving a wide range to the word "music" in connection with the worship of God, we must include not alone congregational music,—meaning by that the singing of hymns by all the people,—but also concerted music, such as is performed exclusively by members of the choir; and instrumental music, such as the organ voluntary and accompaniment. In dealing with this branch of worship, we will first offer some general Preliminary Counsels, and then discuss more at length the hymn as a distinct and important feature in the public service.

1. As one preliminary counsel, I would urge that the minister himself learn to appreciate the importance of the subject. Writing to a friend of his who had enriched the psalmody of the church, Dr. Dale said, "For myself, I feel that to give people hymns to sing is one of the noblest services which a man can render to the church."[1] The minister in his measure does for his congregation what the hymn-writer does for the whole church. The thought

[1] "Life of R. W. Dale, D. D., p. 227.

and care which he bestows on the selection of a hymn or of an anthem may influence his fellow-worshipers almost as powerfully as his prayers or sermons.

Such considerations as the following may serve to enforce this:

(1) The instinct to express devout emotion in song is very general. Listen, for instance, to the outburst of Basil:[1] "Psalmody is the calm of the soul, the response of the spirit, the arbiter of peace. It silences the wave, and conciliates the whirlwind of our passions, soothing the impetuous, tempering the unchaste. Psalmody repels the demons; it lures the ministry of angels; a weapon of defense in nightly terrors, a respite from daily toil. To the infant it is a presiding genius; to manhood a crown of glory; a balm of comfort to the aged." Or recall the pathetic confession of Augustine: "Yet again, when I remember the tears I shed at the psalmody of Thy church, in the beginning of my renewed faith; and how, at this time, I am moved not with the singing, but with the things sung, when they are sung with a clear voice and modulation most suitable, I acknowledge the great use of this institution."[2]

We can understand the glowing enthusiasm of a preacher who was also a poet, when he claimed that of the three correlatives in public worship, Preaching, Prayer, and Praise, the last is the greatest. "Preaching stands related to faith, and when

[1] B. c. A. D. 330

[2] "Confessions," Book X., § 33.

faith shall be lost in sight, preaching may be dispensed with ; Prayer stands related to hope, and when hope shall be finished in fruition, prayer may be superseded ; but Praise stands related to charity —and it shall never fail. Love and song shall be eternal."[1]

(2) Your study of church history may further remind you that the power of song has constantly been felt in great religious movements. You will remember how Chrysostom developed the psalmody of his own church that so he might counteract the influence of Arius, who had put songs embodying his views of Christian doctrine into the mouths of sailors and millers and pilgrims ; and how with the same weapon Ephraem Syrus fought the Gnostics, and Augustine the Donatists ; and how the Crusaders' hymns "rolled forth their truths upon the Oriental air, while a thousand horses' hoofs kept time below, and ten thousand palm leaves whispered and kept time above."[2] You listen to Luther as with his noble version of the forty-sixth Psalm he flings defiances at his enemies ; or as in his pleasant garden in Wittenberg he takes his lute, and confesses that to him music is "the best solace for a sad and sorrowful mind."[3] The opponents of the Reformation did not exaggerate when they declared, "Luther has done us more harm by his songs than by his sermons" ; and Coleridge was no doubt right in claiming that they "Did as much

[1] Robertson of Irvine, "Life," p. 97.
[2] Dale, "Yale Lectures," p. 272. [3] H. W. Beecher.

to advance the Protestant faith as even his translation of the Bible."[1] Not less did Calvin estimate the power of psalmody, when, while insisting that the ear should not be more attentive to the harmony of the sounds than the soul to the hidden meaning of the words, he decreed that in Geneva music should be taught to the children in the day school, so that when they had learnt the psalm thoroughly there, it might be sung heartily in the public worship on Sunday. The foremost champion in America of the theology which is associated with the name of Calvin is Jonathan Edwards, and in writing of the great revival in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1735, he testifies that "there has been scarce any part of divine worship wherein good men amongst us have had grace so drawn forth and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praises."[2] In the last century alike the Calvinist and the Arminian recognized the power of song, as in the earlier era did the Orthodox and the Arian. It is impossible to say how much Methodism owes to its hymn-book. The fiercest opposition often melted away before one of Charles Wesley's lyrics, and his brother took heart when, starting for the interior of Ireland to confront furious mobs and hostile magistrates, he heard the Methodist tunes whistled by Catholic children on his route.[3] Episcopalian though he was, Walter Scott discouraged the proposal to mod-

[1] Guizot, "St. Louis and Calvin," p. 265.
[2] Allen's "Edwards," p. 143. [3] Stevens' "History of Methodism," p. 209.

ernize the psalmody so dear to the people of his native land. "They contain the very words which were spoken and sung by the fathers of the Reformation, sometimes in the wilderness, sometimes in fetters, sometimes at the stake."[1] How closely allied in evangelistic work are the rousing address and the stimulating song will be apparent to any one of us who will recall the other name which rises at once by the law of association in connection with that of Mr. Moody. To Mr. Sankey, and to many others who have in our generation illustrated the ministry of music in the service of Christ, belong in some substantial measure the words which Dr. Austin Phelps addressed to the author of "My faith looks up to Thee": "I cannot but congratulate you on the eternal inheritance which a man receives in being made the author of one good hymn which lives in the hearts of God's people."[2] That to the devil do not belong the best songs and tunes, the religious movements of our own time bear abundant witness. They have arisen and advanced and conquered on tides of popular melody; illustrating if not always with taste yet rarely without effect, the favorite saying of holy George Herbert as he prepared to sing to his viol, "Religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates and sets rules to it."[3] "The holy alliance between sweet sounds and a saintly life," was one which John Stuart Blackie loved to proclaim, as he insisted

[1] "Scott's Journal," p. 704.
[2] "Life of Austin Phelps, D. D.," p. 216. [3] Walton's "Life of Herbert."

that "no sermons ever preached so powerfully bring forth the fullness of devout emotion in the soul as the oratorios, anthems, and hymns of our great composers." [1]

(3) This suggests that the benefit of musical culture to a congregation is very great. It refines, elevates, and in the most wholesome way diverts the mind. "There are," as Dr. Stalker says, "three delights in praise. The foundation of praise is the thought or sentiment; the second element is poetry; music is the third." The singing school in the New England village did a work for which the traveling minstrel troupe and even the struggling lecture course offer an unworthy substitute. A reformation in taste as well as in morals was registered in Kidderminster, when under the powerful ministry of Richard Baxter the streets of an evening were full of the sounds of hymn-singing, floating from open door or casement. Whole districts in the remoter parts of England have been transformed by the introduction of good congregational hymns among the people; and the minister who knows his opportunity has often been able to reinforce his choir from the musical talent—almost amounting at times to genius—which during his pastoral visits he has discovered in the homes of his flock.

(4) Obviously, also, the service as a whole is much affected by the way in which this part of the service is rendered. A hymn or anthem will very likely either deepen or dissipate the impression

[1] "Life of Prof. Blackie," by M. A. Kennedy, p. 258.

made by the prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, or the sermon. There are sensitive people in every congregation who have suffered very much as did Longfellow when he wrote in his diary: "The choir at church to-day absolutely howled, instead of singing; all harsh and out of tune. Important! but who likes to sit in those narrow pews, with his knees crooked, and then have every nerve in him quiver in agony?"[1] As for the minister himself, his experience will be that of the congregation, only with an added intensity. Henry Ward Beecher never failed to recognize the service which his organist rendered him, "by his ability to express and interpret religious emotion," and he claimed that "no efficiency in the leader of the choir, or in the machinery could atone for the lack of appreciation of the devotional element in music."[2] Many a time the sympathetic rendering of a solo, or the enthusiastic singing of a hymn opened the floodgates of the orator's heart, and a sermon of rare power and beauty followed.

2. As a second counsel I would advise you to take personal interest in the music of your church.

Why, let us ask, has this part of the public worship of God been so often neglected, despised, or even condemned? Sometimes from prejudice, and sometimes from ignorance and indifference.

(1) The prejudice on the part of many good people against music as an aid to devotion can be traced to more than one source. *a*. At times it is

[1] "Life," Vol. I., p. 296. [2] Scoville's "Life of Beecher," p. 600.

ecclesiastical. For centuries we have associated an elaborate ritual and fine music with the Church of Rome. The chant, the antiphonal rendering of the psalms, the *Te Deum*, the *Gloria Patri*, have for this reason been looked at with suspicion. *b*. Then, again, this prejudice has had its roots in doctrinal convictions. Since the congregation consists of converted and unconverted persons, it has been said, it is not right that hymns sacred to the use of believers should be sung by all in common. Pushed to its logical extreme this objection, of course, would exclude the common use of prayer, of the Bible, and of public worship itself.

Further, it has been objected that the singing of hymns has no warrant in the New Testament. The constitution of the United Presbyterian Church declares that the use of the Psalms in the worship of God both public and private "to the end of the world" is in accordance with his will, and that these songs "should be employed to the exclusion of the devotional compositions of uninspired men." "Human hymns" are only slowly winning their way into many of the remoter Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and the advance of the organ has been slower still. Among the many controversies of the seventeenth century in which the English Baptists engaged,—often little to their profit,—this question had a prominent place: "Whether the singing of psalms in public worship was according to the mind of Christ."[1] For twenty years Benjamin Keach

[1] Dr. Culross, "Memoir of Hansard Knollys," p. 102.

(whose church was the precursor of that which a century and a half later became famous under the ministry of Mr. Spurgeon), contended for the use of a hymn at the communion and another on the dismissal of the congregation ; and he only won the day at the cost of a painful schism which carried away some of the most conscientious members of the fellowship.[1] The schism was healed after a time, and now the churches no longer insist that those who desire to make melody unto the Lord should do so exclusively in the heart ; being permitted, that is, to sing only so long as they consent to be silent.

(2) More often, it is to be surmised, the neglect of music in the public service arises from ignorance and indifference. The minister (as an old writer complains) wants "not only skill but good-will to this most excelling part of divine service."[2] He magnifies preaching at the expense of everything else. This is due in a great measure to the fact that he has been drilled in the art of preaching but not in the art of singing. Certainly we are almost at the opposite extreme to that of Martin Luther when he declared that "we should not ordain young men as preachers unless they have been well exercised in music." Hitherto little or no attention has been paid to musical instruction in the theological seminaries. Every school of sacred learning should have a Chair of Ecclesiastical Music

[1] Dr. Stanford, "Homilies on Christian Work," p. 64.
[2] Stanford's "Doddridge," p. 128.

and Hymnology. As it is, there is only too much reason for the charge that while music has become a most important agency in the worship of the church, the average minister, as a rule, knows as little about the art as the proverbial chairman of its music committee. It is our present purpose to offer some suggestions which may help to dissipate this ignorance. Before proceeding to do this, a word as to the choir will be in place. In nothing does the minister need grace more than in his management of the choir, and in his influence upon it. In the country church, where the music is voluntary, and where family ties are many and close, this is especially the case. The words of David, spoken when the wicked were before him, the young country pastor learns to repeat under other circumstances: "I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good."[1] No doubt Luther was right when he said that "music was one of the finest and noblest gifts of God in the world"; but there are times when those upon whom the gift has been bestowed are a sore trial to patience. Yet under all circumstances you will do well to keep before the choir and the congregation the true and noble purpose served by music. Musicians, however sensitive, are thankful for a sympathetic, intelligent interest shown by the minister in this part of the service. And above all cherish a high tone of spiritual life. The organist, the leader, every member of the choir, should be a Christian

[1] Ps. 39 : 2.

person. "In the elder days of the church when the Presbyter invested with his singing robes the Psalmista, he said to him: 'See that what thou singest with thy mouth, thou believest also in thy life.'"[1] Especially should the organist be a man of character as well as ability. "The minister and the organist should be as captain and lieutenant of a regiment, each anxious to back up the other, working shoulder to shoulder with all earnestness."

It may be well to advise that you be slow to make any sweeping change in the music. Choirs are commonly apt to be thin-skinned. Each church has its own peculiarities, so that what is good in one place may be the reverse of good in another. Questions of expense, also, have to be weighed, and the committee on music must be controlled in its expenditure by the committee of finance. And you will do well to remember that no one arrangement—a precentor, a quartette, a chorus, whatever it may be—is free from objections. Your wiser plan in most cases, is to take what you find, and gradually to modify and improve it, as the devout taste of the congregation rises in its demands.

3. I pass on to the next counsel, which is, that you educate yourself in this matter of sacred music.

You will be chiefly concerned with the choice of hymns, and in what has now to be said we will confine ourselves in the main to them.

(1) Study lyrical poetry and decide just what constitutes a hymn. The opinion of one of the

[1] "Longfellow's Life," Vol. II., p. 106.

latest authorities on the subject that "a hymn is any copy of verses that has been included in a hymn book, or designed or adapted for congregational worship,"[1] may well be challenged. This criterion furnishes us with not less than four hundred thousand hymns, and leaves to the claims of humble prose a secondary place in literature. Over against this we may put Augustine's brief but inclusive definition of a hymn as "A song of praise to God." Perhaps it will be adequate for our purpose if we say that a hymn is the expression of spiritual emotion in lyrical form, adapted for singing. Make yourself familiar with the best lyrical poems, sacred and secular, in the English language. Some good collection, such as F. T. Palgrave's "Golden Treasury," will be of service here. It is much to be regretted, but little to be wondered at, that so few great poets have written hymns. "For music," said Jenny Lind, "we must have one feeling, one harmony." For the good hymn also we must have these, but in a yet higher sense than she intended. The poet's affections "must be kindled by the fire of Christ's love, before his soul will be able to mount up toward Christ in the music and the service of God." The hymn puts piety before art, and worship is its first essential. Those hymns which the heart of the church cherishes have been written by preachers rather than by laureates. Milton, Addison, Whittier, Longfellow, have scarcely given us half a dozen which

[1] John Julian, M. A., "A Dictionary of Hymnology," Preface.

live, and to Shakespeare, Tennyson, Browning, we look in vain for even this small number. Cowper alone among the poets has really added to the substantial treasury of sacred song. Honest John Newton, who himself sounded the depths of poor poetry and only at rare intervals rose above mediocrity, says with truth: "There is a style and manner suited to the composition of hymns which may be more successfully, or at least more easily, attained by a versifier than a poet. Perspicuity, simplicity, and ease should be chiefly attended to; and the imagery and coloring of poetry, if admitted at all, should be indulged in very sparingly, and with great judgment." That Newton practised what he preached, his hymns are the best evidence. There are many times when he strikes a worthy level, but we may be forgiven if we prefer the sober prose of the Bible narrative to the uneasy movement of his rhyme when he invites us to sing:

> Poor Esau repented too late
> That once he his birthright despised,
> And sold for a morsel of meat
> What could not too highly be priz'd.

(2) You will do well to learn to distinguish the various kinds of sacred music: The classical kind as represented by the masses and other sacred compositions of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven; the German, as we have it in their noble congregational chorals; the Anglican, as it has found a place in our service in anthems and chants and some of the

most solid of our hymn tunes; the Puritan, as it still holds its place in our books in tunes which while not rising to the highest level of psalmody have nevertheless struck the happy mean between the over artistic and the merely popular; and then the popular itself as it occupies an uncertain place in permanent church music in the tunes associated with the Gospel Songs of Moody and Sankey.

(3) The literature of hymns is constantly increasing; and it is quite worthy of study. "The Library of Religious Poetry," by Schaff and Gilman; "The Dictionary of Hymnology," by Julian; Butterworth's "Story of the Hymns," and "Story of the Tunes"; Hatfield's "Poets of the Church"; Miller's "Our Hymns, their Authors and Origin"; Duffield's "English Hymns," and "Latin Hymns," illustrate this branch of literature, while Lord Selborne's "Book of Praise," Palgrave's "Treasury of Sacred Song," and Neale's "Hymns of the Eastern Church," may introduce us to the best hymns of ancient and modern times.

(4) It is likely that in the course of your ministry you will find it necessary to change the hymn book in use in your church. For this reason you should keep yourself well abreast of the times in this matter. Such a change should not be made unless with good cause, but when it is decided upon you should get from the various publishers specimens of their books, and have a committee appointed (of which you may be one) to examine them carefully, and report when a conclusion has been arrived at.

(5) Meanwhile, make for yourself a list of the best hymns. Gladstone considered Cowper's hymn, "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord," the finest in the language for sustained devotional feeling and perfection of expression. To Dean Stanley, Jacob's sublime experience at Peniel found its best expression in the noble hymn of Charles Wesley, "Come, O thou Traveler unknown"; Matthew Arnold, within an hour of his sudden death, declared that Dr. Watts, in "When I survey the wondrous cross," had reached an incomparable degree of excellence. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," seems by common consent to be the hymn to which the heart of Protestant Christendom gives the first place in its affections. The subject of the best hymns is a good one for a prayer meeting talk; and a little collection by W. T. Stead, "Hymns that have Helped," will furnish you valuable hints for the address.

(6) Besides making a careful study of the subject of church music, it will be well that you cultivate a taste for singing. At all events be able to raise the tune in an emergency. With reasonable complacency John Comer, the Baptist pioneer in Rhode Island during the eighteenth century, writes in his diary: "There was no public singing till I came and by the blessing of heaven introduced it." It is not, however, an unmixed advantage when a minister is a connoisseur of music. Dr. Priestly wisely deprecated the very fine ear and exquisite taste in men who must inevitably listen to so much

that is indifferent. By reason of a fortunate deficiency in this respect, "they will be more easily pleased and be less apt to be offended." Singing is one of the cases in which a little learning is not a dangerous thing. It is mortifying to be unable to start a tune at a prayer meeting. To join heartily in the singing of a hymn may be a means of grace even to him who is imperfectly acquainted with music, although it must have been humiliating to the English bishop who is like Charles Lamb, "sentimentally disposed to harmony but yet organically incapable of a tune," to be told by a working man at an evangelistic meeting when he was singing with lusty though discordant enjoyment, "Here, dry up, minister; you're spoiling the show." Recalling a Sunday morning service at Northampton during the long ministry of Dr. Doddridge, John Ryland writes: "The doctor himself gave out the hymns, but could not set the tunes, for he could never change two notes."[1] Dr. Doddridge's hymns are as melodious as any in our language, as easy and musical as indeed is the prose of John Foster, who himself also suffered from the same deficiency of ear. That Foster's taste was limited we may infer from the fact that it was his custom frequently to ask for the lines:

> Forgive, blest shade, the tributary tear
> That mourns thy exit from a world like this;
> Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here
> And stayed thy progress to the seats of bliss.

[1] Stanford's "Doddridge," p. 128.

This was his favorite hymn, and set to suitable music it seemed to afford him a tranquil rather than a stimulating satisfaction. I may add that a practical knowledge of singing will aid you in selecting hymns that will sing well, and will enable you to exercise some intelligent control over the music that is sung.

4. In case you appreciate the importance of the subject, take a personal interest in this part of the service, and by some of the various ways which have been suggested, educate yourself in sacred poetry, it will be tolerably certain that you will use every opportunity to bring this matter of church music home to the minds and hearts of your congregation.

(1) The singing school has already been recommended ; and if this is not practicable, you must resolve that in one way or another you will promote congregational practice. "In order," says a music teacher, "to have good congregational singing there must be congregational practice ; this is just as imperative as that the choir should practice for the proper rendering of its part of the music. Prayer meeting and Sunday-school singing should also, as far as possible, make use of the same hymns and tunes that are sung in the church."

(2) Occasionally lecture on some aspects of the subject. These addresses will be more suitable for a week evening than for Sunday. Your organist and choir will help you in dealing with such topics as "Sacred Music" ; "The Music of the Bible" ;

"Early Christian Hymns"; "The Older Hymns and Tunes"; "The Twelve Best Hymns"; "Hymns with Stories"; "The Ministry and Mission of the Choir."

(3) Keep the subject of church music prominent in the public service. Make the announcement of the hymns clear and impressive. Now and then refer to the hymn, either before or after it is sung. Occasionally preach on church music or some kindred topic. Of Cotton Mather, who seems to have made a practice of doing this once a year, we read on one occasion, "At night Dr. Mather preached in the schoolhouse to the young musicians, from Rev. 14 : 3, 'No man could learn that song.' House full, and the singing extraordinarily excellent." At the prayer meeting, open with a short service of song. Within proper limits, encourage those who attend to call for their favorite hymns. And always insist upon the great importance of this part of the worship of God. In his "Directions for self-examination preparatory to communion," Jonathan Edwards has this question, "Do you live in sin by erring in the neglect of singing God's praise, for if it is God's command that we should worship him in this way, then obviously your duty is to do it. Inasmuch as it cannot be done without learning, therefore, he who has neglected opportunities of doing so is living in sin."

X

MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

(Concluded)

SUMMARY

TWO PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

1. The minister is as responsible for this as for any other part of the service.
2. He should therefore reserve to himself some control over all the music in public worship.

THE HYMN.

1. The minister should be careful in the selection of hymns which are used.
   (1) The doctrine should be sound.
   (2) The sentiment should be wholesome.
   (3) The prevailing spirit should be one of praise.
   (4) Hymns which are too subjective should be avoided.
   (5) And also hymns which preach.
   (6) The literary style of the hymns should be considered. *a*. It must be poetic in expression and in composition. *b*. It should not confuse or mingle metaphor.
   (7) Variety in the selection should be arrived at.
2. The minister should pay attention to the arrangement of the hymns in the service.
3. He should be careful in announcing the hymns.
   (1) No introductory phrase.
   (2) Reading the hymn.
4. He should form one of the congregation throughout this part of the service.
5. He should encourage the congregation to take as large a share as possible in the musical part of the service.

X

MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

IN this chapter we shall deal chiefly with The Hymns which are sung in public worship. Two points need to be noticed before doing this.

1. The minister is as responsible for the musical part of the service as he is for any other part of it. That it may be the means of rousing religious feeling, of deepening conviction, and even of reaching hearts that the sermon may fail to touch, we have already seen. Doddridge received as much pleasure as he gave when he wrote to Watts: "After a sermon from Heb. 6: 12 we sang one of your hymns, and in that part of the worship I had the satisfaction to observe tears in the eyes of several of the people. After the service was over, some of them told me that they were not able to sing, so deeply were their minds affected."[1] In this instance the hymn intensified the feeling which the sermon had first created. No minister can afford to lose this powerful aid to his preaching. Yet there seems to be a very general impression (shared alike by the minister and the musicians) that the responsibility for the music rests entirely upon the leader of the choir or the organist. For

[1] Wilmott's "Sacred Poets," Vol. II., p. 129.

this impression the minister has often himself to blame. He has consented to share his responsibility with another, and then surrendered it altogether. But you should remember how in the temple service the whole charge of the music was in the hands of consecrated Levites. They conducted the great choral services of the national sanctuary, and often composed alike the words that were sung and the music which was performed. Following this precedent, the liturgical churches have priests especially set apart for this purpose. And, besides, without appealing to ecclesiastical authority, as a matter of expediency it is desirable that the whole service be under one supervision.

2. The minister, therefore, should reserve to himself some control over all the music which is to be used in the service. Of course this control must be exercised discreetly. As the leader of the music and the organist grow familiar with the minister's taste and choice, they will instinctively consult them. And he, for his part, will make his share in the musical selections advisory rather than arbitrary. He will interfere as little as possible, but his wishes will naturally be consulted, and his judgment will be conclusive.

We may note in passing that the words of the hymns are not made for the music, but the music for the words. Because a tune is attractive, that is no reason for its being sung, unless a hymn suitable to the occasion calls for it. Any piece of music which does not promote the worship of the

congregation, hinders it. By all means cultivate, in yourself, in the choir, and in the congregation at large, the spirit which prepares the heart before it tunes the voice or the instrument.[1] If this be done the widest range can be given to the musical resources which can be pressed into the service. The only question which you need ask as to the instrument, the voice, the piece of music, is: Does this help the majority of the people to worship God? Others (to take an example) besides the Rev. Dr. Dale might be disposed to say, "I don't think that any sermon on the words, 'The Lord is mindful of his own,' could do so much for me as the anthem when it is well sung."[2]

So much being premised, we will deal with The Hymns which are sung in the Public Service.

1. The minister should be careful in making his selection of hymns. He should choose them himself, and do so intelligently. The course pursued by an old New England pastor of the last century of reading Watts' psalms and hymns right through, and requesting his brethren who occasionally preached for him to hold by the accustomed order, whatever the relevancy, or want of relevancy, of the hymn to the sermon, is not to be commended.[3] This was to sacrifice everything else to routine. And often it must have been hard to find either rhyme or reason in the selection.

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[1] Ps. 57 : 7, 8.

[2] "Life," p. 532.

[3] Dorus Clarke, "Saying the Catechism," p. 14; Elson, "National Music of America," p. 46.

(1) To go into detail in this matter, let us say, in the first place, that the doctrine of the hymn should be sound. The hymns which hold a permanent place in our own books are very doctrinal. Most of them are rich in those great central truths which refer to the person and work of our Lord. And, as a rule, they were born in the times when the heart of the church has been most deeply stirred by great doctrinal convictions. Oliver Wendell Holmes was a very pronounced Unitarian, and yet he wrote: "There are very few modern hymns which have the old ring of saintliness about them. Sometimes when I am disinclined to listen to the preacher at church I turn to the hymn book, and when one strikes my eye I cover the name at the bottom and guess. It is almost invariably Watts or Wesley."

No one will question that very often deep impressions have been made by hymns containing either questionable teaching or an unfair emphasis on certain doctrines of Scripture. Michael Wigglesworth, who came to New England in 1638, must have caught his conception of the divine wrath from medieval sources, rather than from the New Testament, when he could write the following words about the lost, which burned themselves into the memories of the generation of the early settlers in this country:

> They wring their hands, their caitiff hands,
> And gnash their teeth for terror;
> They cry, they roar, for anguish sore,
> And gnaw their tongues for horror;

But get away, without delay,
Christ pities not your cry;
Depart to hell, there may you yell
And roar eternally.

"Who," asks Dr. Austin Phelps,[1] "ever received from the scriptural imagery of Christ's relation to the Father in the work of atonement that conception of the Father's vengeance which Doctor Watts has versified in a stanza which, if it had been sung of the Greek Nemesis, would have surpassed any equal number of lines in Homer?

"Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood,
Which calmed the frowning face;
Which sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
And turned the wrath to grace."

On the other hand, the child who commits to memory the fine hymn of "Praise for Creation and Providence," from the same writer's "Divine and Moral Songs," carries with him a conception of God which may elevate and inspire his whole after life. The doctrinal teaching embodied in such noble hymns as "What equal honors shall we bring?" and "Jesus, lover of my soul," and "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," may quicken and direct the faith which the sermon has failed to touch.

(2) The sentiment of the hymn should be wholesome. This many of the popular hymns are not. Avoid the frequent use of what have been called amatory hymns. "Safe in the arms of Jesus" is

[1] Phelps, "Men and Books," p. 261.

the later representation of this type, which in former generations found expression in

> Dear Saviour, let thy beauties be
> My soul's eternal food.

Faber's "His huge tenderness" and "His sweet blood" are objectionable phrases of the same kind.

Equally with this defect, extravagance and insincerity of expression are to be deprecated. Apart from the imperfect rhyming, good taste objects for this reason to

> Lord, what a barren land is this
> That yields us no supply;
> No cheering fruits, no wholesome trees,
> No streams of living joy.

Even if the religious teaching is sound the sentiment is not in the lines:

> This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
> To seize the everlasting prize;
> And shout, while mounting through the air,
> "Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer."

The florid hymn is to be avoided. Often it is not worthy of the name of literature. "Shall we gather at the river?" is a sample of this kind of doggerel.

The fashion for introducing repulsive imagery into hymns is, we may hope, passing away. We no longer use Doctor Watts' lines:

> Here every bowel of my God
> With soft compassion rolls,

although the lines

> Earth from afar hath heard thy fame
> And worms have learned to lisp thy name,

still baffles the ingenuity of natural history to explain them intelligently.

Good taste will also decide that some things which need to be said in the sermon can find no place in the hymns. It is possible to read but not to sing

> My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
> Damnation and the dead.

(3) As a general rule, the prevailing spirit of the hymns for congregational use should be one of praise. Always have one hymn of praise in the service. There is some reason for the complaint of Doctor Dale that "the hymns which have been written for the last quarter of a century have no faith or hope or joy in them. They are all tears and sighs. They might have been written by people who never heard of the liberty with which Christ made his people free."[1] The psalms of David, the hymns of the early church, the best strains of the hymns that really help, are oftener than not jubilant. This history of sacred song is a history of joyful expression. There was gladness in the song that was sung with timbrels and dances by the enfranchised Hebrews on the banks of the Red Sea, when they had escaped from Egypt, and in the resounding refrain with which the nation cele-

[1] "Life," p. 223.

brated the opening of Solomon's temple. "Praise the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." The Christian church was born in joyful songs,[1] the psalm which accompanied the institution of the Lord's Supper, the outburst of holy confidence with which the little company met the threatenings of the chief priests and elders, even the hymns which Paul and Silas sang in the jail of Philippi[2]—all had in them strains of gladness. The same observation holds true about the hymns which Luther sang at the time of the Protestant Reformation of the fifteenth century, and Wesley, during the evangelical revival two hundred years later. And do not all these and many others anticipate the time when the circle of praise shall be complete and the songs of Moses and the Lamb shall celebrate the first victory of the Lord God Almighty? Augustine may almost be justified in claiming, as he does, that the hymn has a three-fold office to perform—it must praise, and it must praise God, and it must praise God in the form of a song.

(4) Further, we would say, be sparing in the use of subjective hymns. The hymn which appeals to the greatest number is likely to be the hymn best suited to the congregation. There is reason in the criticism of Dr. George Adam Smith, when, contrasting the Psalter with the modern hymn book, he says: "The defect of modern hymnology is that it fails to strike the national note." Certainly the note should be one in which the joys

[1] Matt. 26 : 30; Acts 4 : 24. [2] Acts 16 : 25.

and sorrows, the aspirations and the confessions of the church at large find expression. Channing "never read any but the devotional hymns in a Sunday service," and Emerson "selected those that were of a purely meditative character, without any distinctively Christian experience." But your experience as a pastor will lead you to do the very reverse of this. The hymn in Protestant worship has a distinctively objective office to perform. As Oliver Wendell Holmes says: "The imagination wants help, and if it cannot get it in pictures, statues, crucifixes, it will find it in words."[1] Many of the hymns of Lynch, Faber, Frances Havergal, and Bonar are invaluable for private use, but they are not suited to the general congregation. Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light," is now generally recognized as a touching fragment of autobiography, but not a hymn.

(5) Distinguish between the hymn and the sermon. A hymn should praise, but it should not preach. A good hymn, it has been said, "should embody Scripture, not dogma; it should contain universal truths without being didactic." The pious sentiment,

> Religion is the chief concern
> Of mortals here below,

is not suitable for singing any more than is one of the proverbs of Solomon. The eccentric hyper-Calvinist, William Huntingdon, put the five points

[1] "Life," Vol. II., p. 254.

of his favorite creed into as many stanzas, all of them possessing to the full the complacent satisfaction with self and indifference to the rest of mankind which is expressed in these lines:

> Election is a precious truth,
> But, Lord, I wish to be
> Assur'd by thy own Spirit's mouth,
> That thou hast chosen me.

At the opposite extreme in doctrine, John Wesley is equally guilty of sacrificing the hymn to the sermon when, in his "Hymns on the Trinity," he would have his congregation sing:

> Triune God of pard'ning love,
> Thy divine economy
> All our thankful hearts approve,
> Thee adore in persons three.

After this we can almost forgive Ralph Emerson for embodying his theology in the once famous "Gospel Sonnets," of which one couplet may suffice us:

> Faith's certain by fiducial acts,[1]
> Sense by its evidential facts.

(6) Although not many great poets have left us hymns, yet the question of literary style must not be entirely set aside. *a*. The hymn should be poetic in expression. The father of Isaac Watts was a deacon of a Congregational church at Southampton, and there it was that the young man was impressed with the poverty of the hymns which

[1] "Encyc. Brit.," Art. "Hymns."

were sung. He, as Lord Selborne says, was the first to understand the want at that time of good hymns, and the English Independents, as represented by him, were "the real founders of modern English hymnology."[1] "Consider," says Watts' brother, writing to urge him to publish his hymns, "how very mean the performers of this kind of poetry appear in the pieces already extant."[2] "One hymn writer," he says, "reduces us to yawning indifferency," while another "chimes us asleep." Watts was too modest as well as too conscious of his own limitations to pretend to being a poet. He never, as he puts it, set himself up "among the numerous competitors for a poet of the age. He had only sported with rhyme." Sometimes, it must be confessed, the sport was not very successful. One of his noblest hymns is marred by an unfortunate adjective when he bids any creature

Rise and sing
Peculiar honors to our King.

Such expressions as "How decent and how wise," "He sits on no precarious throne," are commonplace enough. The hymn which ranks among his finest, "When I survey the Wondrous Cross," is disfigured by a stanza—rarely sung now—in which a repulsive simile is abandoned for an unmeaning couplet:

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;

[1] "Encyc. Brit.," Art. "Hymns." [2] "Isaac Watts," by E. P. Hood, p. 85

Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

But a comparison with earlier hymns shows how immeasurably superior was Watts to his predecessors. The hymns sung by the Puritans on both sides of the Atlantic were certainly not marked by much beauty of poetic expression. It must have been no easy matter to line out or to sing such a stanza as:

Why dost thou withdraw thy hand abacke,
And hide it in thy lappe?
Oh pluck it out, and be not slacke
To give thy foes a rappe.

The pastor of the Maze Pond Baptist Church in London, must be credited with more grace of heart than grace of utterance, when he invited his people to celebrate the renovation of the chapel by singing

But oh the want of salt, O Lord!
How few are salted well!
How few are like to salt indeed!
Salt thou thine Israel!

The common-place of expression is reached in such lines as:

As shepherds in Jewry were guarding their sheep
Promiscuously seated, estranged from sleep;

and however much one sympathizes with him in his sufferings it must have been no easy matter to sing:

King Hezekiah lay diseased,
With every dangerous symptom seized.

A minister in one of the midland counties of England was startled, not fifty years since, by discovering this stanza in the hymn book of a little chapel :[1]

> Clipt are the greedy vulture's claws—
> No more we dread his power ;
> He gapes with adamantine jaws,
> And grins—but can't devour.

Even in the fine hymn in which Fawcett gave expression to the joy of Christian fellowship, "Blest be the tie that binds," occurs one couplet which is ludicrous in its suggestion of a tragic misfortune :

> When we asunder part,
> It gives us inward pain.

Then again the hymn should not contain discordant or unmelodious rhyme. To harmonize "joined" and "find," "alone" and "begun," as is attempted in one stanza of a well-known hymn, is a sin against euphony.

b. Although many of our best hymns sin against the law, yet it remains a law in force that a hymn should not be disfigured by confused or mingled metaphors. Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks of "Rock of Ages" "as by repute the best hymn in the English language, and finds the secret of its acceptance in the fact that of all Protestant hymns it is the richest in material imagery."[2] This is probably true, yet in what hymns are the metaphors more mixed ? Robert Robinson was a great master of

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[1] "Life of R. W. McCall," p. 126. [2] "Life," Vol. II., p. 254.

English, but his noble hymn, "Come thou Fount of every blessing"[1] is full of incongruous figures. The same is true of "There is a fountain filled with blood," and others scarcely less popular with Protestant congregations. Plainly the law which forbids mixed metaphors has often been more honored in the breach than in the observance; and yet it is well to respect it.

(7) Aim at variety in your selection of hymns for congregational use. Study freshness. "Sing unto the Lord a new song." Have a large number of hymns on your list from which to choose. Master thoroughly the contents of the hymn book, and mark those which you consider good or which find general acceptance. Do not indulge your personal taste too much. Keep a careful record of the hymns which are sung, and frequently revise it.

2. The minister should pay attention to the arrangement of the hymns in the service.

As a rule, three will be sung; and they should all be sung by the congregation. The choir need not do for us what we can do for ourselves. The first hymn will naturally be one of praise. Let the keynote be strong and inspiring. Do not begin with a hymn which applies to any one part of the congregation only. The hymn before the sermon may be on the general theme of the service, but it should not be on the special verse from which the sermon is to be preached. This is to anticipate the theme of discourse, and rob it of freshness when it

[1] Kern, "Ministry to the Congregation," p. 61.

is announced. The hymn that follows the sermon may deal very closely with the subject of your discourse ; it may, if wisely selected, deepen any impression that has been made. At the evening service, however, this hymn will frequently be one suitable to the close of the day and of the worship. As a rule, Lyman Beecher's judgment seems to be sound.[1] "It is better that the first and second hymns be those of direct worship, and that the subject of the sermon be not distinctly alluded to in either of them; but that the last hymn, sung after the sermon, shall always be closely connected with the sermon, following exactly in its wake—following out and deepening, if possible, the state of mind or emotions awakened by the preacher."

3. The minister should announce the hymn with care. (1) There is no need for any introductory phrase. Read the number once or twice, very distinctly. Do so accurately, and in full: "The hundred and first hymn." (2) As to reading the hymn, there seems to be some prospect that in time this will be abandoned altogether ; certainly you are under no obligation to do so, and if you have the numbers printed in large figures and placed in conspicuous parts of the church, the necessity for reading is much lessened. The days in which hymn books were few have, or ought to have, passed away. The reading of each verse before singing it dates from that time, or from still earlier date when few in the congregation could read. To read the

[1] Lyman Beecher, "Life," Vol. II., p. 152.

hymn, and line it out, was the privilege of the deacon in the Nonconformist churches, as it was the office of the clerk in those of the Establishment. The practice was brought here by the early settlers and "deaconing the hymn" was a current phrase. The practice survived in the churches of Scotland to the present generation, and possibly in remote parishes lingers yet. To Watts we are indebted for a successful onslaught on the habit. "It were to be wished,"[1] says he, "that all congregations and private families would sing as they do in foreign countries, without reading line by line." In New England the deacon clung to his peculiar privilege tenaciously; and there were cases in which the peace of the church was threatened over the question of abandoning it. When the deacon surrendered his office, and the minister took this, as well as all other parts of the service, the reading of each stanza before singing it remained one among those traditional usages to which men cling with unreasoning tenacity.[2] Mr. Spurgeon did this to the last; but probably in his case the character of his congregation made it almost imperative. The objections to doing so, under ordinary circumstances, are that, apart from the fact that it is no longer needed, the reading often retards the progress of the service, and breaks its devout continuity, while it is also true that many a hymn well adapted for singing is not suited to

[1] Duffield, "English Hymns," p. 63.
[2] Elson, "The National Music of America," p. 48.

reading. If, however, you read, do your utmost to read well. Practise the reading of hymns aloud, in your study. When Channing read the line

Angels, roll the stone away!

the congregation "thought they heard the movement of the stone in the air." An American worshiper at the Metropolitan Tabernacle was impressed with Mr. Spurgeon's reading of the hymn. "He shows very clearly that he has studied those hymns thoroughly before entering the pulpit and determined just how to best bring out the truths they contain."

4. During this part of the service the minister should form one of the congregation. By this is meant that he should stand and join in the singing. Even though he is not capable of leading the people in a tune, he should "make a joyful noise to the Lord." He is no less capable of doing this than the majority of his fellow-worshipers, and his distance from them will prevent his disturbing the finer sensibilities of those who are easily distracted by a false or feeble note.

5. Certainly he should encourage the congregation to take as large a share as possible in the musical part of the service. We have already advocated the frequent practice of tunes by the congregation. In Salem, where the "Bay Psalm Book" was first used, the elder "stayed the church after the public worship was ended" to learn the new tunes, and "the church readily consented

thereto." The singers, in their turns, were bidden "so to begin the tune of your first note as the rest may be sung in the compass of your and the people's voices, without squeaking above or grumbling below."[1]

Psalm singing was looked at as a distinct act of worship in the early New England times. When any psalm tune was sung anywhere the caps were doffed, and the Plymouth Colony was yet in its infancy when Robert Bartlett, "having spoken contemptuously of the ordinance of psalm singing, was censured by the General Court." The secular powers can be appealed to no longer, but the minister may by example and precept lead his congregation to rise and join heartily in the singing of all the hymns, and he can lead the way to the time (not far distant, we may hope) when the Psalms will be chanted by the whole congregation. We would suggest that the people generally join in the *Gloria Patri* and in the Doxology. The progress of church music in America has been slow. The first settlers in the New England colonies were followers of Calvin, who discouraged anything save the singing of psalms, rather than of Luther, who believed in praising God with all the resources of voice and instrumental music. Every step in advance of the one psalm, or at most two, allowed by the Pilgrims in Holland has been met with protests and ban. Now, our danger is rather in excess than in deficiency. We have perhaps laid too much

[1] Elson, *ante*, pp. 40, 42, 44.

stress on the artistic rendering of our church music. Assuredly we have traveled from the time when a writer in the "New England Chronicle," in 1723, could utter his lamentation over singing by note in this woful strain: "Truly, I have a great jealousy that if we ever begin to sing by rule the next thing will be to pray by rule and preach by rule, and then comes popery."[1] No doubt safety is to be found in the happy mean. Congregational singing —so far as practicable by note, but by no means exclusively so—is what the minister should encourage among his people. "Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee," should be the high aim toward which he is continually working.

[1] Elson, *ante*, p. 44.

XI

THE SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

SUMMARY

I. Reasons for Considering the Subject.

1. The change in popular feeling.
   (1) The same people formerly attended both services.
   (2) Now to attend two services is rare.
   (3) Causes for this change: *a*. Altered conditions of life. *b*. The present mission of the pulpit. *c*. Prevalent conception of Christian duty. *d*. A modified view of the sanctity of the Sabbath. *e*. The tax upon the minister.
2. The evening service must be maintained.
   (1) A favorable time for preaching the gospel.
   (2) The only time available in many cases.
   (3) Two sermons every week possible to the minister.
   (4) The character of the discourses to be varied.

II. Suggestions for Conducting the Evening Service.

1. In case two sermons have to be preached.
   (1) Vary the subjects of the discourses.
   (2) Vary the treatment of the subjects.
   (3) Vary the method of delivery.
   (4) Put good work into the evening discourses.
   (5) Make the evening service largely evangelistic.
2. In case a freer service can be adopted.
   (1) An illustrated lecture.
   (2) A service of song.
   (3) A lecture on some special subject.
   (4) A Sunday-school concert.
   (5) A Bible class.
   (6) A Bible reading.

III. Counsels.

1. Keep the evening service short.
2. Let the seats be free to all.
3. Print a full order of service.
4. Have good music.
5. Have a frank understanding with your church.

XI

THE SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

WHAT to do with the Sunday evening service is a question which most ministers have to face at the present time. A combination of circumstances, due in great part to the age and land in which we live, has militated against the traditional service of a former generation. The ministry, naturally and wisely conservative, is more apt to cling too long to the old order than too readily to adopt the new. But the change in the importance attached to the Sunday evening service and in the attendance on it forces the pastor to review the whole subject, so as perhaps to give even freer play to fresh methods here than elsewhere. The old order changes, giving place to the new. In making full proof of his ministry he is wise if he also modify his methods of Christian work.

1. Let us first glance at the two chief reasons for considering this subject at length. These are the change in popular feeling, on the one hand, and, on the other, the necessity for still maintaining the evening service.

(1.) As to the change in popular feeling. Formerly it was the custom to have two services every Sunday, and these were, as a rule attended

by the same people. The morning service was followed by an intermission of an hour or two, during which the Sunday-school (where one had been established) convened, and to this succeeded the afternoon service. The whole concluded before dark, and the evening was spent at home, in catechizing the household, in religious reading, and, although only in moderation, in social visiting. The Sabbath at this period was wont to last from sundown on Saturday to sundown on Sunday.

(2.) Now, for the same person to attend two services on Sunday is the exception rather than the rule. An English statesman says, "Once a day is orthodox, but twice a day is Puritan," and many who would not accord with this sentiment are nevertheless more orthodox than Puritan in their practice. The popularity of the minister does not materially affect the matter. Those who love to listen to sermons are apt to argue that if the sermon is a good one it is as much as can be digested with profit, and that if it is not, then the discretion which is the better part of valor counsels against venturing to hear a second. The congregation to which Henry Ward Beecher preached on Sunday evening was as large as that which assembled in the morning, but almost wholly different. "The pewholders," says his biographer, "are absent; strangers have taken their places. The service and the sermon are modified accordingly."

(3.) It is not difficult to account for this change. We may attribute it to the following causes:

a. To the altered conditions of life. The trend toward the cities was never so strong as it is to-day. A quarter of our population is to be found in them. The farmer who went to church with his family and stayed through both services, meeting his neighbors in the interval and discussing the crops and the weather, found that to do so was a social as well as a religious necessity. His son, a merchant in the city, is conscious of no such obligation. He has other sources of information than his father had, and he does not need, as did the Athenians, to tell or hear some new thing. The "crack i' the kirkyard," which formed a substantial feature in the old Scottish Sabbath, has no parallel in his Sunday. Often, also, he lives at some distance from the church which he attends, and to carry his family there a second time is costly to a limited income as well as inconvenient. Nor is it to be forgotten that the stress and strain of modern life is in most cases so severe that the mind as well as the body craves rest. We may almost be disposed to agree with one writer on this subject when he says that the people are often tired, "not tired of the church, or public worship, nor of the minister, but just tired, and want to stay at home and rest";[1] and with him we may add: "Now what is the law of the Sabbath? It is rest—rest for everybody and for the beasts of burden. It appears to us that here we have encountered a divine law which operates throughout all nature."

[1] "Outlook," April, 1899.

b. Again, we need to take into account the present mission of the pulpit. It is now only one voice among many. The preacher is under no obligation, as perhaps he once was, to discuss political crises and national questions for the benefit of his congregation. Clerical opinion is not any longer fortified by any mysterious ecclesiastical authority. The minister cannot now speak *ex cathedra*. The newspaper and the political orator and the social reformer are sources of popular information to-day. The opinion of the minister, when he descends to the arena of subjects not distinctively religious, is worth no more than the opinion of any other man. And these added sources of information are a distinct advantage to him. Now he can confine himself to his own theme. "A preacher of the gospel is a man whose duty is to declare the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ."[1] "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master."[2] The fashion set by some preachers, for invading the province of the platform and the newspaper leader, has not tended to increase congregations permanently; it has not augmented the popular respect for the minister; nor has it quickened the spiritual forces by which the world is to be drawn to Christ.

c. The change in popular feeling as to the second service on Sunday may also be traced to the conception of Christian duty which is now prevalent. The church of the present time, if it is wise, will be aggressive. It will not consent to be bounded by

[1] Dr. C. H. Parkhurst. [2] Matt. 10: 25.

the walls of the meeting-house. Mission schools and mission services will engage its attention. Mr. Spurgeon computed that a thousand members of his church were occupied every Sunday evening in one form or another of evangelistic work, and therefore absent from his own service. The Sunday-school adds to the labors and exhausts the nervous energies of multitudes of Christian people. In the various forms of Young People's Meetings tens of thousands now find the stimulus and nourishment for which they formerly looked exclusively to the sermon. The idea that the whole duty of a Christian person is to be in his pew twice every Sunday is forever exploded.

d. To these considerations must be added the modified view now so prevalent of the sanctity of the Sabbath. The change in this regard during the past fifty years has no doubt come about largely in consequence of new tides of population pouring into the country. The German, the Canadian French, the Italian, the Pole, the Hebrew elements, have never been brought under the influence of the traditional Puritan Sabbath. The need for a day of rest is stronger than it ever was ; but the sense of obligation to keep that religiously was probably never weaker.

e. Nor can we omit to mention the heavy tax upon the minister which is entailed by the second service. Sermons are, we may presume, worthier of the name than formerly. The average of excellence is a higher average. Very likely congre-

gations are more critical than they used to be, and they are harder to please. Certainly the minister is heavier laden with work than was his predecessor of a hundred years ago. Besides his pastoral visiting, he is on committees, he has to organize and arrange for meetings in the interests of various religious societies, and his own church is a center of business as exacting and important as the business of any member of his congregation. Under this strain he has to prepare his two sermons, and he will often appreciate the truth of Mr. Moody's statement: "I was settled at one period of my life for two years in one place, and I worked harder when I was there, preaching two sermons in the week, than I have done since, all the time I have been going up and down through the country."[1] Under this combined pressure on body and mind and heart, the minister breaks down more frequently than he used to, so that it is not hard to account for the death, almost in their prime, of some of the most conspicuously active and successful ministers of our generation.

2. The subject demands to be considered, also, because the evening service in the majority of cases needs to be maintained.

(1) The evening is the most favorable time for preaching the gospel. It may be true that "the worship of one Sunday morning is equal to that of half a dozen Sunday evenings—it is of so much more genuine color and free from excitement";

[1] "Parish Problems," p. 414.

but it is equally true that the majority of people are reached through their emotions rather than through their intellects. "I have found," said Mr. Moody, "Sunday night the best time to preach gospel sermons, because people seemingly do not expect to be converted by a Sunday morning sermon." The evangelical awakening under Wesley laid much stress on the evening sermon. At that period there were parts of England in which the day finished with outdoor sports in accordance with the decree of King James the First, and the clergy of the Established Church oftener than not encouraged the practice.[1] Certainly the majority of them preferred this way to closing the day with a service such as the Methodists everywhere established; and they would have sympathized with the Swiss clergyman who was wont to cap his argument against the propriety of evening services by gravely quoting "the fall of Eutychus."[2]

(2) It may also be noted, as another point in favor of a continuance of the evening preaching service, that it is then that the young people are especially apt to be present, while to many persons it is the only possible time for attending church. In the poorer districts of cities, and in the great centers of industry, people come out more readily in the evening.

(3) We may add that to compose and preach two sermons a week is possible for any minister of

[1] "Life and Letters of Adam Sedgwick," Vol. I., p. 41.
[2] Lane's "Life of Vinet," p. 40.

ordinary ability. Chrysostom and the early Fathers did so, and from their day to the present the custom has prevailed. There have been protests, but it is to be noted that they have come from the men who by a sermon have intended a finished oration. If we are familiar with the elaborate sermons of Bishop Lancelot Andrews, we shall not wonder at his saying: "When I preached twice on the Sunday, I prated once."[1] Robert Hall had his own exacting ideal in mind when, being asked how many discourses a minister could get up each week, he answered, "If he is a deep thinker and a great condenser, he may get up one; if he is an ordinary man, two; if he is an ass, sir, he will produce half a dozen."[2] Dean Hook considered one sermon a week to be enough for an ordinary man, and yet on one occasion his own diary records, "Three sermons written this day." But Phillips Brooks puts the matter in its true light, when, after deprecating "great sermons," he says: "But that a man who lives with God, whose delight is to study God's words in the Bible, in the world, in history, in human nature, who is thinking about Christ and man and salvation every day, that he should not be able to talk about these things, seriously, lovingly, thoughtfully, simply, for two half-hours every week is inconceivable, and I do not believe it."[3]

II. We proceed to offer some suggestions for conducting the Evening Service.

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[1] 1555-1626. [2] Davies, "Successful Preachers," p. 182.
[3] "Lectures on Preaching," p. 152.

1. First, we will take the case of the minister who is expected to preach two sermons on the Sunday.

(1) You will do well to vary the subjects of the two discourses. Beware of going twice over the same or similar lines. Occasionally, of course, you will take two subjects which are complementary, and which together set forth a complete and well-rounded truth. As a rule, however, the two sermons should differ as much as possible. By this is not meant that in the evening there should be any abandonment of the distinctly religious character of the exercise. Addresses on literary subjects—studies of great poems, and the like—seem to be out of place here. Nor do we mean that the preacher in his search for variety should fall back on an appeal to sensational themes, or throw a tub to the whale in the shape of what he calls a prelude, in which he discusses current politics and kindred subjects. An appeal to such methods does not hold the people, but "it does cheapen the pulpit and set the house of God in the same row with the drygoods stores, millinery shops and other institutions that put big head-lines in the newspapers, and flaming placards in the front windows."[1] There is quite range enough in the message of salvation for the minister of Jesus Christ to find variety in the subjects of his discourses Sunday by Sunday.

(2) Vary, also, your treatment of the subject in the evening. The Scottish method is admirable,

[1] Dr. C. H. Parkhurst.

where a sermon is prepared for one service and a lecture or exposition for the other. People and preacher alike rebel against monotony, and this can be avoided by having a running series of expository lectures or studies of Scripture characters for one part of the day. "By parting with expository preaching," as Doctor Phelps says, "the pulpit has parted with its most important aid and a stimulus to variety. No other one thing gives to preaching so wide a range of religious thought as the exposition of the Scriptures, when it comes forth as the fruit of a rich, full mind—rich in scholarly resources and full of intense, practical aims."[1] The advice of Dr. R. S. Storrs is weighty from his own long and honorable experience: "If one discourse is preceptive and hortatory, let another be narrative in its structure. If one is closely argumentative, let the next be a careful yet free exposition of a parable or psalm. So you will find that the mind releases itself from the one subject by taking another entirely distinct; its natural resilience is helped and stimulated, and you cease to be weighted with your previous processes."[2]

Greater freedom should be given to the evening sermon. The members of the congregation have in some instances been trained to assist in preparing it by looking up material bearing on the topic to be discussed, and the Rev. C. M. Sheldon, who has

[1] "Theory," etc., p. 209.

[2] "Preaching Without Notes," p. 57. See also "Yale Lectures," by Doctor Crosby, p. 193, and "Parish Problems," p. 410, *et seq.*

tried the method for series of discourses, finds that "the interest excited in the preaching of the sermons is in proportion to the number of persons engaged in their preparation." The plan of preaching two sermons which are alike in conception, character, and treatment is fast passing out of use, and we should most of us be inclined to agree with Professor Drummond, that the making of two such sermons a week is not "the best thing a minister can do for Christ," in the accumulation and pressure of church work to-day.

(3) It may be well also that you vary the method of delivery in the two sermons. Some ministers preach once with and once without notes. Others, who do not read, write out one sermon in full, but trust to a carefully prepared brief for the second. At all events, the delivery of the evening discourse is likely to be freer and bolder and less conventional than that of the morning.

(4) Not that good work should not be put into the second sermon. Do not allow yourself to think that you can spend the principal part of your time and give the freshest of your thought to the morning sermon, leaving that of the evening to gather up the fragments which remain. The second sermon preached by F. W. Robertson was often the better of the two. Spurgeon's evening discourse, although frequently run into a different mold from that of the morning, was quite as memorable.

(5) By all means make the evening service largely evangelistic. Sometimes it may be pre-

ceded by a brief service in the open air. The ritualists are setting a good example by holding short services in two or three places on the way to the church and inviting the loungers on the streets to join with the congregation gathering for worship. The procession with cross and candle may not commend itself to our judgment, but the spirit of the effort is admirable and the end which is sought is often good, while those who attend these services testify to the deep respect everywhere paid to the procession and its exhortations and songs. The main thing for you to be assured of is that you have a distinct message for the people from God. Follow the service up with a prayer meeting. Draw the net. One of the most successful preachers of the present time announced not long since at his evening service that he would be in the lecture room of the church from nine o'clock till ten to be interrogated by any one present, and the questions which were put to him showed that many an inquiring spirit welcomed the opportunity to submit his doubts and difficulties to a scholarly and sympathetic minister.[1]

2. We pass to consider the best course to pursue in case a freer service can be adopted.

The nature of the service must be determined by the neighborhood in which the church is placed as well as by the character of the congregation attending it.

(1) Of late years illustrated sermons have been

[1] Dr. John Clifford, London.

tried, in some instances with good success. Reverting to the Middle Ages, when the chancel of the parish church was at certain seasons transformed into a stage for dramatic representations of Scripture scenes, the Episcopalians in England have not hesitated in some places to hold lantern services in which the hymns to be sung and the characters and events to be referred to in the sermon are thrown upon the screen, which is placed between the chancel and the nave of the church. In the same way one at least of the English bishops holds mass meetings in a circus on Sunday evenings and illustrates his address by the use of a lantern. As a means for making a more vivid impression on minds not readily accessible to the sermon these methods may be commended. We are disposed, however, to modify the commendation with Mr. Spurgeon's advice to a minister who consulted him: "The gospel ought to be its own attraction without pictures; but if you can do anything to save the perishing don't stop for any one's opinions."

(2) Occasionally a service of song may be useful. There are some churches in which such a service is held once in each month, and in other churches the second service has been turned into a musical performance, to which Phillips Brooks, with unwonted irony, alludes when he says: "If the people will insist on coming twice to the church, let us cheat them with a little poor music and a 'few remarks' and call it a 'vesper service.'"[1] The

[1] "Yale Lectures," p. 152.

purpose served by this service cannot justify the sacrifice of the sermon, which is God's appointed way of reaching the human heart with the message of salvation.

(3) A series of Sunday evening lectures on special subjects is often profitable and attractive. Take the history of missions and illustrate it from biography, beginning with Paul and coming down to our own times. The lives of such men as Columba, Boniface, Francis of Assisi, Las Casas, Isaac Jogues, Egede, Eliot, Brainard, Carey, Henry Martyn, Judson, Moffat or Livingstone, John Williams, Bishop Huntington, Neesema, and John G. Paton, are full of intense interest. In the same way the great reformers, preachers, and philanthropists of Christendom may be treated.

(4) Occasionally the Sunday-school forces should be rallied or the Christian Endeavor Society or Young People's Union, and an evening devoted to their work and progress.

(5) Much good has come from a Sunday evening Bible class preparatory to the next Sunday's lesson in the Sunday-school. In the hands of a skilled expositor, who will encourage and answer questions and press the moral and spiritual teaching of the lesson home on conscience and heart, very much can be said in favor of this way of using the second service.

(6) There have been cases where the minister has so carefully and intelligently studied the difficult art of reading the Bible that a service devoted

to this one thing entirely, and in which no sermon has been attempted, has crowded the church. The people really need to know not so much what the preacher says about the Bible as what the Bible itself says. Such a service, with prayer and suitable music, should last an hour, and must be prepared for with much pains. The reading may take the form of one continued biography, such as that of Joseph, or of selections from many places in the Bible, all illustrating one distinct topic. So much as to various uses to which the Sunday evening service can be put. Of course these suggestions are not exhaustive. The mind of the minister must be kept fertile with new plans and hospitable to new ideas. Having said so much, I must add my conviction that you will best secure the true end of your ministry by remaining loyal to the sermon. Shorten it in length, adapt it to the times and the people, but in every service let there be a message such as fidelity to your commission demands from you. The place of this can be taken by no substitute. With Doctor Ker I would say, "The church that cannot and will not preach, and preach well, must go down." And what is true of the church is true of the minister. The Eastern Church suffered preaching to decline and ritual to take its place, and it was powerless before the rise of Mohammedanism. The Western Churches have never lost their faith in the preacher, and to-day the sermon sways congregations from Rome to San Francisco. The first thing for the preacher, as Doctor

Chalmers used to say, is to be known as the man of one commodity, the gospel of divine help and salvation. That service misses its mark which fails to impress the worshiper with this fact. "My son," counseled Dr. Francis Wayland, "I beg you will always so preach as to reveal God's hatred of sin and his love for the sinner; man's guilt and condemnation, and God's infinite willingness and power to save sinners through the gift and sacrificial sufferings of his Son."

III. It only remains for me to offer some counsels which may apply to the Sunday Evening Service, whatever be the special form that it happens to take.

1. Let the service be kept within the hour. There is no need that the sermon be run into any traditional mold or drawn out to any traditional length. The "Morning Exercises" of Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, although more than a century has passed since they were spoken, are still admirable models of virile Saxon. Briefer yet are the five-minute sermons of the Paulist Fathers and the addresses at the vesper services of Harvard University. "Do not please the devil," wrote John Wesley to Adam Clarke, "by preaching too loud or too long, but please God by denying yourself herein." Remember, however, that the shorter the sermon the more care must you take in preparing it.

2. Let the seats be free to all. Do not pauperize the hearts of the people by omitting the collection.

There have been always abundant proofs that a congregation, if properly approached on the subject, prefers to pay for any expense incurred on its behalf. When, in a district full of mills and artisans and remote from wealthy suburbs, Doctor Dale threw open his chapel every Sunday evening and resolved that there should "be no reserved seats," he had to record that while a few persons gave up their sittings, "the income of the weekly offering which we now collect from pew to pew at both services has more than compensated for the loss."[1] The ushering, meanwhile, should be well done, and a hearty but never servile welcome given to every comer alike.

3. Print a full order of service. Do not invite the congregation to sing or to join in a responsive reading or chant when the words are not accessible. The expense of this printing can readily be met by an appeal to the people who come.

4. While not allowing the service to degenerate into a sacred concert, you should see that the music is good. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that an ordinary Sunday evening congregation cares for classical music exclusively. One or more hymns of a popular character, and such as all the people can sing, should always find a place in the order of service. A chorus choir leading in the hearty singing of gospel hymns touches many to whom the finest rendering of an anthem or solo will appeal in vain.

[1] "Life," p. 526.

5. From the beginning have a frank understanding with your church as to their responsibility for the success in part in this important service. Consult with them as to what will best suit the claims of the neighborhood and what is likely to meet the demand that the gospel be preached to every creature. Not to the pastor any more than to the people belongs the duty of making this service a spiritual power. There are churches which lose a congregation about every ten years by their lack of enterprise, of tact, of sociability. You will do well to shoulder no more of the responsibility for the prosperous course of the service than falls to your share. If the Sunday-school is large and energetic, the teachers can do much through their classes to furnish you with just the congregation you need. Nor is it right that the members of the church should remain at home on Sunday evening and expect you to make up for their absence by your own powers to draw people to church. The backing of Christian people is of vast importance to the preaching. No man can occupy the breach single-handed. To know that you are supported, as you minister to a congregation in large part composed of strangers, by the presence and the prayers of the most earnest members of your church, will be a constant source of strength to you. Peter lifted up his voice on the day of Pentecost with all the more boldness because the eleven stood up with him.[1]

[1] Acts 2 : 14.

XII

THE BAPTISM SERVICE

SUMMARY

I. PRELIMINARY HINTS.

1. Study Scripture for models, precedents, and principles.
2. Do not as a rule advertise the baptism service.
3. As to the time for holding the service.
4. The baptizing committee to be carefully selected.
5. The candidate for baptism not to be burdened with directions previous to the service.

II. THE SERVICE.

1. If possible the pastor should himself conduct the entire service.
2. Occasionally it may be well to arrange and use a special form of service.
3. As to the subjects upon which to preach on this occasion.
4. The directions for the act of baptizing.
5. The music to be used during the service.
6. The spirit in which the service should be conducted.
   (1) The great importance of this service.
   (2) Jesting or levity unseemly.

XII

THE BAPTISM SERVICE

I. BEFORE dealing with the public baptism service it may be well to offer some suggestions to the minister upon whom so largely the conduct of the service will rest.

1. The first of these is that he should study his Bible intelligently for models, precedents, and principles. He will do well to remember that the responsibility for baptism in any particular case lies primarily with the person baptized. This conviction it was that led Robert Robinson, in the last century, to insist that "the baptism of those who believe in Jesus Christ is not a church ordinance";[1] while it finds more careful expression in the words of Dr. A. H. Strong: "Upon the person newly regenerate the command of Christ first terminates; only upon his giving evidence of the change within him does it become the duty of the church to see that he has opportunity to follow Christ in baptism."[2] This important point should be made clear in the church-book, when the record may run thus: "A. B., on a profession of his faith was received for membership in this church after baptism."

2. As a rule it is not necessary to advertise the

[1] "Works of R. Robinson," Vol. I., p. cvi.
[2] A. H. Strong, "Systematic Theology," p. 532.

baptism service publicly. To do this is to encourage the belief that this distinctive and distinguishing rite is our reason for separate existence, whereas it is only one of several important results which flow from our loyalty to Scripture; and, besides this, it tends to degrade a most solemn and beautiful service into a spectacle. It ought not to be necessary to caution the minister against any attempt at scenic effects, as is the case when it is advertised that it will be "performed with a spectacular imitation of the river Jordan."

3. The time when the baptism service is held may be varied. Much can be said in favor of a special service on Sunday afternoon. Often a week evening prayer meeting furnishes a profitable occasion for baptizing. The Sunday evening is more usual with us; but while much can be urged in its behalf, it should not be allowed to interfere with the preaching of the gospel, for which no other hour is so suitable. The Sunday morning is likely to be more quiet and solemn. Many ministers prefer baptizing at the opening rather than at the close of the service, holding that this is to be preferred on behalf alike of the candidate, the pastor, and the congregation.

4. Much care should be given to the selection of the members of the baptizing committee. It will be their duty to see to the dress of the candidates, to look after every detail of the service in private, and to be in attendance in the dressing room before and after the rite is administered.

5. No good is done, but only in many cases harm, by giving minute directions beforehand to the person about to be baptized. They are apt to be forgotten, or, worse still, misunderstood, and even in a nervous moment reversed by the candidate. Far better is it to speak to him when in the baptistery, in an assuring undertone. The simpler all the arrangements are, providing only that they be sufficient, the better.

II. We pass now to the service itself.

1. Our strong advice is that the minister conduct the entire service himself. There is no need of help, and from its first words to the benediction the service gains in impressiveness by being wholly under his control.

2. Occasionally it may be well to arrange for a service which shall be exclusively devoted to the administration of the ordinance. There should then be no sermon. Let the words of Scripture and the act of loyalty to Christ's command alone speak. Such a service may begin with the *Te Deum*, or some suitable chant or anthem, followed by a reading from the Psalms (the theme of which may be the blessedness of obedience), and a hymn. Before the second reading from the Bible (which may be chosen from the narratives of baptisms in the New Testament), there should be a prayer, and a shorter prayer, bearing specially on this particular service, may follow this reading. A hymn succeeds, and then the administration of baptism, and the dismissal with the benediction.

3. It is certainly unnecessary, if a sermon is preached, to invariably discuss baptism. Often the less that is said about a rite which more than any other is self-interpreting, the better, and never should the sacred influence of the service be disturbed by a polemical discourse. Preach on the resurrection to new life, or some kindred topic, and let the act of baptism be set forth as a perpetual witness to the great central truth of the Christian Faith. We lay emphasis upon this, because the impression which is made on a candid and devout mind by the baptism itself may be seriously injured by the spirit in which it is administered. "There is more argument for the truth, as to subject and mode, in one properly administered baptism than in a dozen sermons. Its expressive symbolism is an absolute demonstration of its rightness."[1]

4. In the water it is best to use the simplest form. The minister should receive the candidate from the member of the baptizing committee who has the matter in charge, and slowly lead him down the steps or the inclined plane to the place where he is to be immersed. One hand should be placed on the back of the candidate and the other against the candidate's clasped hands. The act of immersion should be very deliberate, and the person baptized be raised again slowly and with little or no disturbance of the water. Be calm and self-possessed. Call the candidate by name, saying,

[1] Dr. G. C. Baldwin, "A Forty-one Years' Pastorate," p. 214.

"A. B., on a profession of thy faith, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." No purpose is served by asking questions of the candidate. They have already been answered. This is not the moment when he can command his words, and a mere form is mischievous and unmeaning. Be natural in voice as well as in manner, and let your tone be assuring. The usual mode of baptizing backward is probably on the whole the more convenient, and, as there is no special significance in any one particular method over another, convenience must decide in this matter. Much can be urged, however, in favor of baptizing kneeling or forward. Robert Robinson, describing what he believed to be the primitive custom, said: "The administrator, whether in or out of the water, stood on the right side of the candidate, his face looking to his shoulder. The candidate stood erect, and the administrator, while he pronounced the baptismal words, laid his right hand on the back of the head of the candidate and bowed him gently forward till he was all under water."[1]

After the immersion, lead the person who has been baptized to the steps and guide him till he is again under the care of the attendant member of the baptizing committee. See that there is a handkerchief ready to apply to the face, and in every way assist him yourself. The act of immersion is sometimes disconcerting to an emotional nature,

[1] R. Robinson, "History of Baptism," p. 546.

and you will need to impart to him some of your own self-control. In the hands of a practised administrator the service is almost invariably seemly and quiet.

5. During the baptism the organ may be played softly, rising in swell of sound as the candidate is immersed and lifted from the water, and a hymn sung, a verse at a time between the baptism of the various candidates is heartily to be commended. It could be wished, indeed, that we had more baptismal hymns.

6. Throughout the entire service the minister should be specially upon his guard. Doctor Baldwin says truly: "We believe that it is part of our mission to preserve this ordinance, which symbolizes the fundamental, historical, doctrinal, and experimental truths of Christianity as it was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastors cannot be too careful in personally attending to the details connected with the administration of this sacred rite."[1] It were devoutly to be wished that no word of warning were needed against the tendency to speak in a jesting tone and manner about this holy ordinance of our Christian religion. "To make any burial the subject of a jest is a painful profanation. To make the burial of the believer with his crucified Lord the theme of vapid wit or foolish jesting is shocking to every spiritual mind."[2] The Baptist minister should beware lest in an unguarded moment he fall into this temptation of the

[1] "Forty-one Years," etc., p. 213. [2] Dr. George W. Anderson.

evil one. Nor should he suffer ministers of other denominations, whether in public or private, to do so without in some way signifying his grief and displeasure. There is no better excuse for pleasantry about baptism than about the Lord's Supper. Each ordinance is equally appointed by Christ and each is equally sacred. It may be well to add that neither should we treat with any levity the practice of infant baptism. The error which it perpetuates is too serious in its nature and effect to be made a matter of jesting even were the rite not associated in the thoughts of multitudes of Christian people with much that is to them intensely solemn.

As a concluding note it may be added that some form of certificate[1] should be prepared by the minister and given to the person baptized after the service, or he may preserve the date and circumstances under which he was obedient to this divine command.

[1] Such as "The Baptismal Souvenir," prepared by the Rev. H. Wyse Jones, Canandaigua, N. Y.

XIII

THE LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE

SUMMARY

I. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SERVICE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.
   1. Sacrificial.
   2. Memorial.
   3. Family.
   4. Personal.

   Note. 1. Each of these to be preserved.
   2. Keep each in mind during the service.
   3. Let them decide the details of the service.
   4. Preserve, as far as may be, the words of Scripture.

II. THE ORDER OF SERVICE.

   Preliminary Notes.

   1. The Breaking of Bread. [Order of Service].
   2. The Passing of the Cup. [Order of Service].
   3. Conclusion. Hymns to be sung. Prayer or benediction. Social greeting.

III. THE TIME FOR HOLDING THE SERVICE.

IV. CONCLUDING COUNSELS.
   1. Avoid controversy as to wine.
   2. Carefully instruct the deacons in their duties.
   3. Preserve a cheerful but solemn demeanor.
   4. Occasionally use the service to quicken the energies of the church.
   5. Endeavor always to be with the church on communion Sunday.
   6. Adopt a system of communion tickets.
   7. Frequently preach upon subjects suitable to the service.

XIII

THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE benefit which we derive from partaking of the Lord's Supper will depend to a large extent on our clear understanding of its nature and purpose. These are indicated by the terms which are used to designate it in the New Testament, while the erroneous conception of the ordinance is preserved in other terms for which there is no scriptural authority. From the lips of Jesus himself came no one succinct and comprehensive word for the service. The authority for its perpetual observance can be drawn from the Gospels only by inference. Every reason for the disciples observing it at the first remains in force for us who are disciples now. The phrase "The Lord's Supper"[1]—the name most familiar to us—is used by Paul in the passage which is our strongest direct authority for the continuous observance of the meal. The words "the breaking of bread,"[2] in the Acts of the Apostles, even though they point to the time when, before abuses put an end to the practice, the Lord's Supper was inseparably connected with the love feasts of the Christians, do none the less remain to this

[1] 1 Cor. 11 : 20.

[2] Acts 2 : 42-46. *Cf.* Jacob's "Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament," p. 207, etc., and Alford's "Greek Testament," *in loc.*, 1 Cor. 10 : 16.

day as one designation for the ordinance. "The communion of the body and blood of Christ" brings to our minds the deepest and most precious truth in the gospel of our salvation, the fact that we are spiritual partakers of the divine life. There is no scriptural authority for the fine term "The Eucharist"; although it was no doubt derived from Paul's phrase, "the cup of blessing."[1] To call the meal "The Sacrament," is to revert to the Roman soldier's oath of fidelity to his leader; and to this phrase we owe much of the unnatural awe with which the ordinance has been invested at the hands of superstition and priestcraft. By us it should never be used.

I. For purposes not of controversy but of profit we may notice some aspects of this service which have the authority of the New Testament.

1. The first of these is the sacrificial conception. The narrative of the synoptical Gospels may lead us to the conclusion that at the first the Lord's Supper was instituted as a sacrificial feast of the new covenant.[2] Our recoil from materialistic conceptions of the institution must not be suffered to rob us of the profound truth which superstition has perverted, that in this service Christ gives us in symbol what by faith we have already appropriated, his life, himself. The gift was not consummated until on the cross the complete sacrifice had been made. This life he gives us through his broken body. "As we have sinned, the life could not

[1] 1 Cor. 10 : 16. [2] Luke 22 : 19; Matt. 26 : 28.

become ours except through his death as the sacrifice for the sins of the world."[1]

2. A second aspect of the Lord's Supper service which is essential to profitable participation, is the memorial conception. It is a memorial, however, which is full of hope. "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."[2] "In remembrance of me" links itself with the other golden phrase "till he come."

3. Then, in the third place, we must give due weight to the family conception.[3] The Lord's Supper is the most comprehensive expression of the true communion of saints. The family may be taken to mean the church in any one place assembled; but it may also mean the whole household of faith, and in the Communion we enter into fellowship with all who love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper was celebrated only by those who were already saved. "In the original idea those who came to the table had already come to Christ, and were in mystic union with him by faith."[4] The abuses of later centuries can most of them be traced back to a willful perversion of this great truth.

4. Finally, there is the personal aspect. The severest self-examination on the part of the disciples was quickened before the Supper by the ominous warning of their Master: "Verily I say unto you,

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[1] "Life of R. W. Dale, D.D.," pp. 360, 361.
[2] Mark 14 : 25. [3] Matt. 26 : 26, 29. [4] Dr. John Brown.

that one of you shall betray me."[1] That self-examination was a necessary preliminary to the service we infer from Paul's words,[2] "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." The service known as "Fencing the Tables," once usual among the Presbyterians, or its later modification The Preparatory Lecture, as well as the form of "Warning for the celebration of the holy Communion," prescribed by the Episcopal Church, all point to this same duty of self-examination. To pervert and abuse this necessary preparation for a profitable partaking of the Communion, to degrade it into a mere form of words or act of transient penance, all these, as the centuries show only too clearly, are fatally easy. Nevertheless, the personal element in the Lord's Supper must not be omitted. There are none of us but may find in the disciples' sorrowful inquiry, "one by one, Is it I?" words suitable for our own lips. This, however, with the wholesome caution of Dr. Dale: "Self-examination is a very necessary thing now and then, but I think that when we are at the Lord's Supper we should think of Christ, not of ourselves."[3]

NOTE. Now each of these four aspects of the Lord's Supper—the Sacrificial, the Memorial, the Family, the Personal Conception of it—has in it a truth which must be preserved. The enumeration is not exhaustive, but it is intended to guide you in your conduct of the service. These four leading

[1] Matt. 26 : 21. [2] 1 Cor. 11 : 28, 31. [3] "Life," p. 539.

thoughts—that Christ was the sacrifice for our sins; that he is to come again the second time; that we are not solitary but in fellowship with the great host of believers the world over, and indeed also all time through; and that each one of us is personally accountable to God and therefore needs to examine himself, must be kept in mind as the service proceeds. They will decide for you the choice of hymns to be sung, of passages of Scripture to be repeated, and they will also lead you into profitable lines of thought in prayer and address. So far as possible from first to last preserve the very words of Scripture in all parts of the Lord's Supper service.

II. We now pass on to consider the Order of Service.

Let us premise that where it is usual to give an invitation to other than the members of the local church to remain and partake of the Supper, it should be so framed as to avoid any unnecessary exclusiveness; and also let us recommend that the congregation be given to understand that they will be welcomed as spectators, for in this way the service has often proved a means of grace. The giving of the hand of fellowship to new members is no part of the Lord's Supper proper. It is to be regretted that it is not done at the preliminary church meeting, when more time could be devoted to welcoming the new-comers and acquainting them with their brethren. Probably very early in the history of the Christian church the beautiful practice arose of connecting the Supper with gifts to

the Lord's poor. Nowhere else can this beneficence be more fittingly shown, although it did not enter into the service as originally instituted.

The Lord's Supper service divides itself into two parts.

1. The Breaking of Bread. Begin with a period of silence; discourage whispering or any noise. Do not speak until all the people have come together. In case you think well, you may have a hymn at this point, but if you do so, let its character be in close keeping with the service to follow.

To this quiet time succeeds the prayer, which should be largely one of thanksgiving, and, after it, break the bread. There is no reason why it should not have been prepared for use beforehand. The minister does not assume the place of Christ nor does he pretend to any priestly authority. At the Communion service in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle the deacons and visiting brethren, who were seated at the upper table, took a part in breaking the bread.

Having made the bread ready, use the forms of distribution, not the words of Jesus necessarily, which were peculiarly sacred to his use, but rather those of Paul.[1] This is followed by the distribution of the bread to the minister and people. While this is being done you may with advantage, in a subdued but distinct voice, recite suitable passages of Scripture. Or you can often, with equal advantage, have this part of the service conducted in per-

[1] 1 Cor. 11 : 23.

fect silence. The deacons are next to be served, and with this the first part of the service concludes. In some churches it is the custom for the communicants to retain the bread in their hands until all are served, and, at the words "Eat ye all of it,"[1] spoken by the pastor, all partake together. The deacon in charge should now remove or set on one side the platters of bread and prepare the table for the succeeding part of the service.

2. The Passing of the Cup. Whether the earlier custom of using a few large flagons be maintained, or the later innovation of "the individual cup,"—and in respect to which much may be said on either side,—in either case the minister should prepare the cups for distribution, and, everything being in discreet and seemly order, he may offer the second prayer. This will naturally deal more largely than the first with the two thoughts associated with it by Jesus himself:[2] "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you," and "I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Then, having repeated the form from 1 Cor. 11 : 25, with, occasionally, the addition of Paul's own words which follow,[3] give the cups to the deacons to be distributed by them, and, after this is done, rise to receive the cups when they are returned to the table. Having passed the cups to the deacons, pause for a few moments, and then let the collection for the neces-

[1] Rom. 12 : 5; 1 Cor. 10 : 17.
[2] Luke 22 : 20; Matt. 26 : 29. [3] 1 Cor. 11 : 26–28.

sary expenses of the service and for the church poor be taken. To the collection should succeed a hymn. Select it with care. Do not have any instrumental music, and still less an anthem.[1] Such hymns as "According to thy gracious word" (Montgomery); "By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored" (Rawson); "Come, let us join our cheerful songs" (Watts); "Come, thou Fount of every blessing" (Robinson); "How sweet and awful is the place" (Watts); "Jesus, the very thought of thee" (Bernard); "There is a fountain filled with blood" (Cowper), may be commended.[2]

Conclude the service in a brief prayer or benediction. The custom of not dismissing the congregation at all, but saying only, "When they had sung a hymn they went out," is a piece of assumption. It is to endeavor to reproduce the first Supper. The hymn which Jesus and his disciples sang was in all probability "the last part of the Hallel, or great Hallel, which consisted of Psalms 115–118," and, to be consistent, the modern ritualist should use these psalms only for his concluding hymn.[3] It is to be remembered also that Jesus and his disciples "went forth over the brook Kidron,"[4] to the garden, the agony, the betrayal, the night of awful suffering, for all of which we have no parallel.

After the service, should time permit, the minis-

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[1] "Dale's Life," p. 532.

[2] Heb. 13 : 15; 2 Thess. 1 : 10, 12; Jude 24, 25; Rev. 1 : 5, 6.

[3] See Geikie's "Life of Christ," Vol. II., pp. 504, 505.

[4] Matt. 26 : 30.

ter may stand at the door to shake hands with the people as they go out and to welcome brethren from other churches who happen to be present.

III. Something should be said, at this point, as to the time for holding the Lord's Supper service.

It is very much to be regretted that so often the Communion follows immediately the morning service and precedes the session of the Sunday-school. Nothing has tended more to the neglect or the inadequate treatment of this sacred service than that arrangement. Where possible the service should be entirely separate. The afternoon is a very suitable time. Churches which observe the Supper less frequently than do we set apart an entire Sunday morning for it. Occasionally by all means have it appointed for Sunday evening. The close of the old year in this way is very solemn. And you are wise also to find a time once or twice in the year when those who cannot be present in the morning can attend. Where the Communion is held once a month in the morning let the whole service be harmonious ; let the subject of your sermon or address be experimental, closely connected with the fellowship of the believer with his Saviour.

The Scripture precedent is entirely in favor of weekly Communion. Thus was it observed by the apostles and early Christians. Such theologians as Calvin and John Owen favor it. Mr. Spurgeon, with all his great work concentrating on Sunday, yet observed the Lord's Supper on each Lord's Day. This is becoming customary with some

churches, and it may be hoped that ultimately it will prevail with all. On the first Sunday in the month there should then be an afternoon service, occupying a full hour, and on the remaining Sundays in the month the Supper should be observed after the morning or evening service, as may be most convenient.[1]

IV. In conclusion I would counsel:

1. Avoid all controversies as to the wine. It is only the slave to the letter who will insist that the wine must be of the same character as that used at the first Lord's Supper. The spirit of Christ will lead us to abstain from giving any offense to our brethren or putting in their way a stumbling-block. The symbolism of brotherhood has certainly been marred by the substitution of many cups for one, preferable though that is in other respects. And so the unfermented wine may not convey the same meaning that the fermented does. But we do not pretend to be literalists, otherwise we should use only unleavened bread, and possibly should continue (as did some of our forefathers) to practise feet-washing as a preliminary to the Lord's Supper. Mr. Spurgeon surrendered his early prejudice in favor of fermented wine, and was only disappointed when an analysis of the wine which he substituted for it revealed nineteen per cent. of alcohol.[2] Dr. Joseph Parker would prefer water to "the concoctions by which, in some instances, wine has been

[1] "Life of Adolph Sapher," p. 146.
[2] "Reminiscences of C. H. Spurgeon," Williams, p. 40.

displaced." In parts of the world where wine of any sort is unknown the use of milk has been advocated. In China a missionary bishop, finding neither bread nor wine to be ordinary articles of food, suggested rice-cake and tea. In Uganda, Bishop Tucker authorized the use of plantain bread and plantain wine. It will be enough if you see to it that whatever is used is wholesome as well as unfermented.

2. Carefully instruct the deacons in their duties. In no service should there be closer attention paid to what is seemly. The very simplicity of the ordinance among us is an added reason for propriety and decorum.

3. Throughout the service preserve a cheerful and yet solemn demeanor. "The Lord's Supper ought to be administered with exultation and triumph and lofty cheer. The bread is broken indeed, but the body it typifies is raised in glory; the wine is poured out, but it is to be drunk as in the kingdom of heaven." Not only is the meaning of the Lord's Supper missed "when it is clothed with sadness, but it is nullified in its effect, for there is no growth in Christian character except in an atmosphere of light and joy. It was at the Supper that Christ said most of his joy and its fullness."[1]

4. The Communion service may be made the occasion for mustering the church, rallying its forces, and appealing to it for renewed Christian activity. "Here," as Phillips Brooks said, "we can meet in

[1] Dr. T. T. Munger.

a great host at the table of the Lord, and own ourselves his children, and claim the strength of his bread and wine, and then go out with calm, strong, earnest faces to our work." With Phillips Brooks we may conclude, as the Communion service lifts up its voice and sings in triumph the great anthem of dedicated human life: "Ah, my friend, that, nothing less than that, is the real Holy Communion of the church of the living God."

5. By all means endeavor always to be at home with your own people at the monthly Communion service. After an absence from home, Matthew Henry writes: "I never had been away so much as one first Lord's Day in any month till now since coming to Chester twenty-four years ago."

6. I would strongly recommend some system by which attendance at the Communion can be registered. The cards in the pew in which each person —whether a regular or an occasional communicant —enters his name and address are useful. Much simpler is it to furnish each member of the church with twelve tickets at the commencement of the year, requesting that one ticket each month should be put into the collection box. Then, by means of a book properly ruled for the twelve Sundays in the year, you can keep account of the attendance of every member of your church. This will be found invaluable as a basis for pastoral visiting.

7. Frequently in the course of your regular ministry preach upon subjects bearing on the Lord's Supper service.

For the sacrificial aspect of the Supper we suggest such topics as : " The Remembrance of Jesus " (Luke 22 : 19) ; " The Food of the Believer " (John 4 : 34) ; for the memorial aspect : " The Blessed Hope," " The Temporary Character of the Lord's Supper " ; for the family aspect : " Christian Fellowship," " Separation from the World," " The Vine and the Branches," " Brethren in Christ " (Col. 1 : 2), " Eating and Drinking with Christ " (Acts 10 : 41) ; and for the personal aspect : " Self-examination" (1 Cor. 11 : 28), " Bitter Herbs " (Exod. 12 : 8), " Personal Union with Christ," " Causes for Personal Thankfulness " (Ps. 116 : 12, 13).

XIV

THE PRAYER MEETING

SUMMARY

I. IN GENERAL.
   1. The prayer meeting the pulse of the church.
   2. Minor details to be carefully attended to.
   3. The order of service.

II. CHARACTERISTICS.
   1. Should be spiritual and social.
   2. Let cheerfulness be the prevailing tone.
   3. Make the prayer meeting business-like.

III. MANAGEMENT.
   1. Never lose personal control over the meeting.
   2. Let the exercises be marked by life and movement.

IV. THE PRAYERS.
   1. There should be more prayer than conference.
   2. Features of the prayer-meeting prayer.

V. THE SINGING.

VI. THE ADDRESS.
   Should be: 1. Early in evening. 2. Extemporaneous. 3. Biblical. 4. On one subject. 5. Keep list of topics. 6. Announce topics.

CONCLUSION.

XIV

THE PRAYER MEETING

I. ANY treatise on Public Worship which said nothing as to the church prayer meeting would, by virtue of that omission, be imperfect. In our simple polity it occupies a conspicuous position. We find no substitute for it in any other kind of service. The whole church engaged in prayer and conference is the ideal toward which it strives. From just such a meeting was the Christian church born,[1] for, but for the gathering of the faithful in the upper room in Jerusalem where "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," the day of Pentecost had not "fully come," the sermon of Peter might never have been preached, and the picture of the early fellowship to which the Lord added day by day those that were being saved, had never furnished us the model for our church life to-day.[2]

1. From that first prayer meeting onward to the present hour, however much it may have changed its form, this service has continually marked, by its use or disuse, by the formalism which has robbed it of its purpose or the fire of devotion which has radiated from its living heart, the condition of the

[1] Acts 1 : 13, 14. [2] Acts 2 : 46, 47.

church. The health of a church to-day can better be gauged by its prayer meeting than by any other one service. It is therefore no mere commonplace to say that the prayer meeting is the pulse of the church. It is a commonplace only because it is so true. For this reason the minister should study to have, and to deserve the reputation for having, good congregational prayer meetings. The secret of the continued prosperity of many churches may be found here. The Monday evening prayer meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, at which Mr. Spurgeon himself always presided, "was attended by upward of two thousand of his members." His own counsel is, "Always insist on the congregation coming to the prayer meeting." We should not be anxious for large numbers, so much as for the general attendance of the members of the church. The family prayer at home, and the church prayer at this meeting, are the two most powerful preservatives of vigorous life in any Christian fellowship. Well does Dr. Robertson Nicoll urge the importance of this weekly gathering: "There are some who believe our Lord said, 'Where two or three thousand are met together there will I be in the midst of them?' But he didn't. He said two or three, because he foresaw there would be often only two or three. Two people make a prayer meeting, and for a very good reason. There are always three where there are two. He is there who spoke the word. You cannot speak without speaking in his ear. He will keep his tryst. Is

there any church where you cannot get the people together in that number? Teach the people what prayer will do and they will find their way to the prayer meeting in time. It is the meeting of the church for hard, close wrestling with God. Intercession waits as deep as love, takes upon itself the anxiety, the fears, the loneliness of the one who is loved. In intercession we have largely to answer our own prayers. When Scotland was dead with Moderatism, there were in the Highlands little praying societies, without any minister, who met together to pray that God would revive his own people; and God did it and will do it."

2. If you are wise you will, in this matter of the church prayer meeting, pay personal attention to minor matters of detail. Let the room in which the meeting is held be some other than the audience room of the church. Let it be too small rather than too large for the congregation. Keep the people close together. Bring those who come early well forward. Between yourself and them let there be as little vacant space as possible. There is sympathy in contact.[1] The advantage of the prayer meeting over the public service is that you get closer to the people. The influence which comes from informal association has freer play. "If," says a pastor, "I must choose one to the exclusion of the other, between the pulpit and the dais of the conference room, give me the conference room. On the latter, I and my audience are

[1] Matt. 8 : 3; Luke 10 : 23.

ten feet nearer to each other in more senses than one." There is no reason why you should stay on the platform, even. If it will promote ease and a readier flow of brotherly feeling, come down and sit among the people.

Let the meeting begin promptly on the hour; let it last one hour, and unless there is some special reason for prolonging it, close on the minute. Because Horace Bushnell was governed by a military promptness and punctuality, business men were willing to give the hour for the week evening meeting. "Rain or shine, audience or no audience, the service began punctually on the minute, and closed promptly at the end of the hour."[1]

3. As a rule, it seems best to preserve a uniform order of service. The first quarter of an hour may be prefatory. Sing two or three hymns; pray yourself, or call on some one whom you can trust to do so profitably. Let prayer and praise strike the keynote for the meeting. Another quarter of an hour may be devoted to the reading of the Bible and the address. Do not read more than ten or fifteen verses. Let the address be carefully thought out, but do not have any notes with you. Continuous expositions, week by week, taking a few verses at a time, are very much to be commended.

II. Passing now to the characteristics of the prayer meeting,

1. Observe that it should be pre-eminently spiritual and social. Of all meetings it should

[1] "Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell," p. 292.

be the one which certainly feeds the spiritual life. And it should be homelike, natural, genial, friendly. A visitor at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, when Mr. Spurgeon presided, was "particularly struck with the freedom from all formality and the family feeling which pervaded the meeting. The pastor and people seemed thoroughly knit together in the bonds of love." The prayer meeting is the church at home. It gives, as no other service does, what an eminent Episcopalian desired when he said, "I long for acts of social worship."[1] Mr. Spurgeon confessed that he "would rather a prayer meeting should be a kind of celestial 'free and easy' than the dull things some were." In advising a regular order of service I would not be understood to encourage a lifeless uniformity. No two prayer meetings should be alike. Monotony kills a meeting as certainly as a dead level of road kills a horse. The soul as much as the body or the mind covets variety. Let every chord be made to resound. Have for your aim the resolve of the psalmist: "I will sing a new song unto thee, O God; upon a psaltery of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee." Mr. Moody gives sound advice in compact form, when he says, "Let the minister get to the meeting awhile before the time for beginning, and shake hands with persons as they come in. Sit close together, up around the leader. Give out the subject of the meeting in advance. Get all to take part. Let there be variety; a praise, promise, or

[1] Prof. Adam Sedgwick, "Life," Vol. II., p. 461.

witness meeting occasionally. Do not let the meeting get into the hands of the few." Equally to the point is the advice of Dr. Kerr Tupper: "Open the services occasionally by repeating in unison the books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; regularly have a Scripture lesson read responsively by pastor and people; on some occasions leave the platform and sit among the people, thus leaving the meeting with no leader but the Holy Spirit."

2. Let the prevailing tone be one of cheerfulness. To this end be cheerful yourself. Do not allow yourself to scold or to complain. Give no countenance to croakers and chronic grumblers. Suppress any disposition to engage in controversy. Some prayer meetings have a tendency to degenerate into debating societies. The contagious cheerfulness of Mr. Spurgeon found vent in kindly humor which "did not in any way mar the solemnity of the meeting, but rather imparted a liveliness to it which was somewhat charming." It is only half the truth to say that "religion never was designed to make our pleasures less." The atmosphere of genial cheerfulness which marks the happy home should be diffused through the prayer meeting.

3. And yet it is well to add that you should do all in your power to make the prayer meeting business-like. Have a distinct purpose in view. "The New Testament chroniclers of the church during the first fourteen years of its existence report three great meetings, three only.[1] What were

[1] Acts of the Apostles, Chap. 2, 4, and 12.

they? Meetings for business? Yes, because they were meetings for prayer. The first was the Pentecostal prayer meeting; the second was a prayer meeting that the church might have power to meet the world when the world began to threaten; the third was to rescue Peter from prison at a crisis when it seemed that the church could not do without him."[1]

The aim will be attained if you know the material at your disposal. In order to do this you may make a careful canvass of your church and ascertain who will endeavor to be present and what part each one will take. It will further strengthen this conception of prayer as a practical force if you now and then narrate answers to prayers in your own experience and call for such testimonials from others. You will soon come to believe that nowhere else in all the world is the response quicker or clearer than it is to direct, earnest, Christian prayer.

III. Let us now consider the management of the Prayer Meeting.

1. My first point here is that the leader must lead. Either death or disorder is likely to be the fate of the meeting which is under no control. The Holy Spirit does indeed guide, but he is the God not of confusion but of order. He was never more manifestly present than on the day of Pentecost, but he worked through Peter as the voice of the apostles and their leader. You may throw the

[1] Dr. Charles Stanford.

meeting open, but you must not throw the meeting away.

Be prepared for unforeseen emergencies. The unexpected is more likely to happen in a meeting where there are many who will speak than at a service which you alone conduct. There will be times when the subject which you suggest will be evidently superseded in the general will of the people by some other topic that a later speaker may open up. The current of the meeting flows along in the channel of the river, not the canal. Let it flow. The prayer meeting, like the God whose blessing it seeks, fulfills itself in many ways.

The democratic character of the gathering leaves you in a measure at the mercy of interruption from speakers who may be good men but are not always wise. Aimless things will be said and foolish things will be done. You will need to restrain with good temper, but with firmness, the incursions of those who hinder rather than help. There may possibly be some forward person whose reputation in the community is unsavory. In extreme cases of this sort I have known the deacons request him to be silent. But the more frequent foes to the prayer meeting are men who have no savor to speak of and nevertheless speak. Their words are flat, stale, and unprofitable. They illustrate the distinction between discourse and discursiveness. At other times the unprofitable brother—or sister—is afflicted with a contagious melancholy, or he is always on the opposite side to every one else, and

persists through the medium of prayer or remarks in bringing in a minority report. The quiet pool in the river is apt to be the harbor of refuge for the crooked stick, which floats in there and there remains. Were the river always in flood this would not happen. Keep the meeting moving and the tide at flood and you will not suffer from the stagnant brother. While he is coming another will step down before him. Nor should you hesitate to speak about the matter if prayers and remarks become prosy and too long. There may come a time when it is even necessary to put the unprofitable speaker down. Not until he has been privately remonstrated with should this be done. It will be likely to offend and perhaps alienate him, and therefore it should be your last resort. Yet there are occasions when the words of Caiaphas carry a truth which needs to be laid to heart, occasions, that is, when it is expedient that one man suffer and that the whole meeting perish not.

2. What has just been said will prepare the way for a further point. Let all the exercises be characterized by life. They must move. Pauses are to be avoided. Start a hymn, call on some one to pray. Ask for texts from the Bible or verses from favorite hymns. Get the young people to take part. The Puritan maxim, that they should be seen but not heard, does not hold good here. Try to bring out latent power. If you do not think it is there, wait until the meeting is dismissed and listen to the tied tongues that are then loosed. Doc-

tor Cuyler is within the mark when he says : "It is perfectly possible for at least four-fifths of all who attend devotional and social services to take part in them if they will do just two things. First, let them bring something to the meeting, and, secondly, let them ask God to help them out with it." It is well now and then to ask a number of those who are constant attendants at the prayer meeting to take part. See them previously and tell them what the subject for the evening is to be. If women are in the habit of speaking and praying at this service it may be kind to give them a few hints as to how to make their voices audible. There may be brethren and sisters to whom this does not apply, but when persons really speak to the profit of the gathering it is as well that they should learn how to so speak as to be heard.

By all means be on the watch at the prayer meeting for symptoms of a revival. Often here is where it starts. The fire kindles first at the heart and thence spreads outward. A good motto for the prayer meeting—you may well have it printed and hung in a conspicuous place and now and again refer to it—is this :

> Carried on by Everybody,
> Monopolized by Nobody,
> Making every one present a Somebody.

IV. As to the prayers at the prayer meeting.

1. We would first urge that as a rule there should be more prayer than conference. So Robert Hall

said, "There should be less speaking and more prayer; that is the only thing which has power with God. I don't like so much parade and ostentation." The temptation to put speaking in the place of prayer is older than the days of Robert Hall. In the British Museum, London, there is preserved an old paper on which is printed a proclamation, dated the second year of Edward the Sixth's reign, and which orders that all preachers whatsoever shall for a certain specified period stop their preaching and instead thereof take to praying. The prayer meetings of the early church seem to have been prayer meetings indeed.[1]

The warning uttered by Robert Hall suggests that the leader should discourage in himself and in others the excessive egotism which mars so many prayer meetings. "The personal testimony of a saved man is sometimes of great worth and has a very marked effect in a prayer meeting, especially when given with evident humility and with no savor of boasting. But how often is the *ego* projected into prayers and testimonies as if the speaker was the prominent figure in the subject and not the man Christ Jesus. True men, men of the right Christian type, become more self-oblivious as their spirituality increases, and no word of pietistic cant is heard from their lips. As the carnal *ego* is crucified with Christ the new man rises into life, honor, and grandeur."[2] This tendency to talk about self on the part of those who are heard in the prayer

[1] Acts 2 : 42; 4 : 31. [2] Dr. P. S. Henson.

meeting can often be checked by a return to prayer rather than a persistence in conference.

2. It may be well to say something at this point about the peculiar features of the prayer that is most suitable at this meeting. In case you yourself offer the first prayer let it be stimulating and inspiring. Do not have much petition in this prayer. Do not exhaust the list of things to be prayed for, and, like Isaac Barrow in his preaching, leave nothing for him who comes after. The prayers in the prayer meeting may be more familiar and personal than those in the public service, and should be short and to the point. Doctor Stanford says: "Why trifle with Christ's precious time? As it is, a pastor longing for the power which alone can make the truth victorious, but which the church must pray for, gives notice of a meeting for this special purpose, goes to it with an intolerable sense of crisis; then it often happens that the petitioner who leads off the meeting is totally unable to alter mechanical habits, begins an adorative discourse about the perfections of God in words that were once glowing coals but are now dead cinders. Then he proceeds in his tranquil travels through a regular succession of petitions that range over everything, until at last he reaches the final word, and so brings the familiar train of topics to a symmetrical close. That is how to stamp reality out of a prayer meeting and to make it dull. Dull! I should think it is dull. Dull to sinners, dull to saints, dull to man, and dull to God."

The time has passed, let us hope, when "two prayers pretty well filled up the time" allotted to this part of the meeting. The minister who records this condition of things, perhaps fifty years ago, adds: "We had among us some worthy old men who were always present and who were at any time good for twenty-five minutes apiece. One of my good old friends—peace be to his memory—once prayed that I might be in the hands of the Lord what the jawbone was in the hands of Samson, which, considering of what creature the jawbone had been a part, was a hit at my plain-speaking."[1]

Sentence prayers are often very profitable. The shortest prayers in Scripture were sometimes the most effective. If a man has a definite aim in prayer he will not be long in getting his bearings and discharging his gun. Spurgeon says: "Long prayers injure prayer meetings. Fancy a man praying for twenty minutes and then asking God to forgive his shortcomings."

Occasionally it is well to have distinct seasons of silent prayer, but these should be reserved for times of intense concentrated feeling. It is well that we should learn, with David, to sit before the Lord, and with him to commune with our own hearts and be still.[2]

V. Pay special attention to the singing at the prayer meeting. You should have much of it and it should be hearty and general. "If Christians sang more, temptations would have less power, the

[1] "Life of Hugh Stowell Brown," p. 83. [2] 1 Chron. 17 : 16.

feet would be lighter in the sowing and reaping, there would be more sunlight in our daily pathways, and the church would easily surmount the giant rocks of seeming impossibilities. Fill the prayer meeting with songs of praise and it cannot be dull nor lacking in the fruits of comfort and inspiration. Not a hymn of four or five verses, but one verse at a time, thrown in between petition and remarks."[1] To be able yourself to sing will be of more service at the prayer meeting than anywhere else, but in case you are not able, you should have some one who is upon whose presence you can confidently rely. A good piano or chamber organ is most serviceable, and yet it is not well to use it constantly. A burst of impromptu song, or a hymn sung with no accompaniment, often quickens fervor more than the instrument can. The player should remain at the organ throughout the service, ready to strike the keys at a moment's notice. The formality of sitting down and rising up with each hymn on the part of the player is to be avoided.

Within reasonable bounds encourage the congregation to call for favorite hymns. You will be fortunate if you have persons present who have devotion as well as music in their souls and who will now and then raise a hymn without any announcement. It is well to know the hymn book thoroughly. Take pains to select a book which is neither exclusively wedded to the old hymns nor entirely absorbed in the new. The old solid hymns

[1] Dr. A. E. Kittredge.

should be retained. We may have gained in liveliness, but we have lost in spiritual power by setting them aside in favor of songs in which, too generally, sentiment is mistaken for feeling and the words are made secondary to the tune. Come to the meeting with a list of hymns suitable to your subject, but do not keep to it at all closely. It is well to be on the lookout for new hymns and occasionally to print a sheet for insertion at the end of the book in use. In this way you can renew your selection. The hymns at the prayer meeting should be bright and cheerful, full of praise, quickening the joy and kindling the enthusiasm of the worshipers. It was at one of his church prayer meetings that Mr. Spurgeon said, in dealing with a request for prayer from some troubled Christian, "The devil will be sure to bark if you seek Christ, but he cannot bite. Never mind the bark. Make music of it." At our prayer meetings many a tempted soul, like Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress," escapes from the valley of the shadow of death with a song. There are always tired men and women who come, often at personal cost to themselves, from a wearing day's work, and frequently a song will do more for them than a sermon.

VI. Coming now to deal with the address which the minister delivers at the prayer meeting, we may counsel, 1. That it come early in the evening. Oftener than not, if the subject is a happy one, it will strike the keynote for the whole service. By no means should the address exceed from ten to

fifteen minutes. Many a meeting is killed because the leader will not learn to deny himself in this matter of length. The churches which show a disposition to dispense with the prayer meeting are the churches where the ministers have done too much talking, appropriating to themselves the time which belongs of right to all.

2. The address should be extemporaneous, and yet it should be carefully thought out beforehand. His rare impromptu powers led Mr. Spurgeon to speak without preparation, on these occasions, and indeed to find his subject after coming to the meeting. But he says, "I restrict myself to simple, homely talk about the elements of our faith. It is of no use to rise before an assembly and hope to be inspired upon subjects of which one knows nothing; if any one is so unwise, the result will be that, as he knows nothing, he will probably say it, and the people will not be edified. But I do not see why a man cannot speak extemporaneously upon a subject which he fully understands."[1]

3. The address should be biblical, and often it will be wise to make it consist entirely of a running comment upon the passage of Scripture which you read. Gather around that passage parallel texts, and so give a real Bible reading.

4. Keep to one subject only, and let it be a subject which touches on "men's business and bosoms." "He is much more of a Christian on a Wednesday than on a Sunday," was the comment which one

[1] "Autobiography," Vol. I., p. 365.

of his congregation made upon a minister whose spiritual power was most conspicuous at his week evening services. The fact was, no doubt, that he dealt on these occasions with the experiences of his people. He brought his materials rather from the pastoral visit than from the study ; the book from which he read was the living epistle of the human heart. So subjects which are simple and experimental are easily taken up and followed by the people.

5. It will be well to keep a list of the topics used in the prayer meeting. By referring to it at intervals you will see what subjects have not received attention, and so will be led to vary your themes and add to their numbers. Once a month you should set apart an evening for a missionary meeting. Let it be of all the meetings the one for which you make the most careful preparation. Appoint a committee to be especially responsible for it. Let the members of this committee keep themselves posted in the news from the various mission fields. At the beginning of each year apportion the fields upon which reports are to be made. Occasionally call for a word from each representative as to his special mission, Indian, Burmese, Chinese, Japanese, African, and so on. At other times occupy the evening mainly with one field. The "Missionary Magazine" should be circulated and its contents mastered, but not a line should be read at the meeting. Let all be extemporaneous. Now and then take home missions, or again have a field day

for work in Sunday-school or missions of your own church. Be sure to have a large map, conspicuously displayed and constantly used.

6. Announce subjects from one prayer meeting to the next, and also announce them at the Sunday services. Prepare the people for that on which they will be called upon to speak and pray. Yet unless you are engaged in the continuous study of some book of the Bible it is not wise to lay out formal plans for many weeks ahead. Each prayer meeting belongs to the week in which it is held, and no doubt there is reason in the complaint of a regular attendant of these meetings for half a century when he says, "Ministers kill prayer meetings by taking too much care of them; just as I have known doctors kill children by too much treatment. Prayer meetings would have more real life and efficiency if trusted more to the Holy Spirit —to Christ in the hearts of real Christians present."[1] At no other meeting does the minister so certainly feel the pulse of his people as here. It may be well to have a letter box in the vestibule of the church and invite the congregation to drop in topics, questions, special requests for prayer, and notes on matters of personal or common interest.

In conclusion I would urge you to magnify the prayer meeting. No meeting of your church can you less afford to slight. From it you will yourself

[1] See Baldwin, "Forty-one Years' Pastorate"; L. O. Thompson, "The Prayer Meeting"; "Parish Problems"; Spurgeon's "Lectures to my Students"; T. L. Cuyler, "How to be a Pastor."

gain the most refreshment. Yet no meeting is more likely to vary in its character, in the responsiveness of the people, in the element of life, in directness of aim and business-like alertness. Should it occasionally lag or languish, you need neither be surprised nor despondent. There are tides to prayer meetings ; they are not always taken at the flood. When the meeting is flat and sluggish you can by such methods as have already been suggested do much to infuse fresh life into it. But do not put too much trust in human means or well-devised machinery. After all, the tides are moved from above. Surely of the prayer meeting is the promise especially true, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[1] Be more anxious for the presence of Christ than for anything else. If it is true, as Augustine says, that where he is there is the church, not less true is it that where he is there is the prayer meeting. To advance his glory gathered the first church prayer meetings, as they are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The brethren who met on the eve of Pentecost, and soon after under the shadow of persecution, spoke to him as one present in their gatherings. Glorify Christ, and their experience will surely be yours also. "You cannot speak in his name," Dr. R. S. Storrs says, "but you will speak in his ear."

[1] Matt. 18 : 20.

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